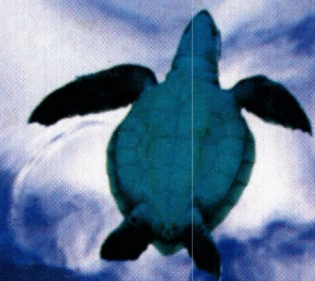


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Skin Diver

THE WORLD'S MOST READ SCUBA DIVING AND SNORKELING MAGAZINE • JUNE 2001



The Old Navy Shakedown

Searching for a Sweet Spot
in the Florida Keys

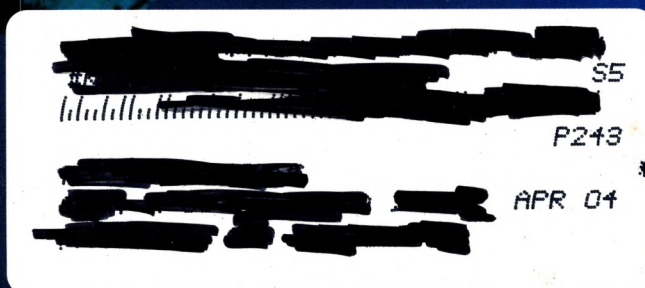
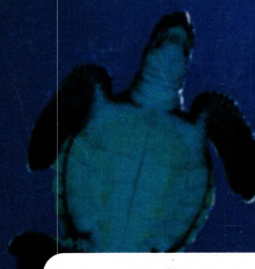
Cast Away

in the Untamed Paradise
of Western Micronesia

Tales From the Wall Side

Turks and Caicos

Cayman Extreme:
Tekking it to the Limit



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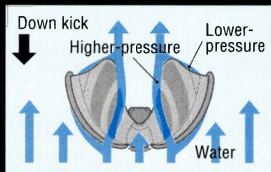
performance chart >>>

XPERT ZOOM FIN

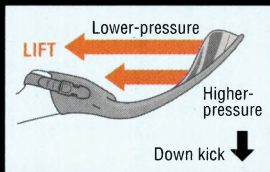
CONVENTIONAL FIN

technical specs

Traditional fins only use repulsive force to create propulsion. This normally means that in order to create strong propulsion, maximum effort is required, resulting in muscle fatigue not only for beginners, women, and middle-aged divers, but professionals as well. Added to which, the body moves left and right in reaction to the kicking needed to move forward, thus reducing propulsion.



The SF-8 has a blade that is split down the middle, so it takes the shape shown in the diagram when kicked under water. This special blade shape creates propulsion (lift) by generating a pressure differential above and below the blade, in addition to the repulsive force created by kicking. The SF-8 is a fin that allows all divers to create propulsion using only a small bent-knee kick, with a light rhythm.



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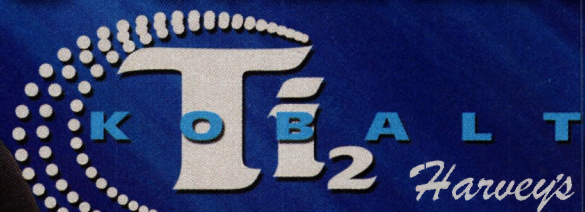


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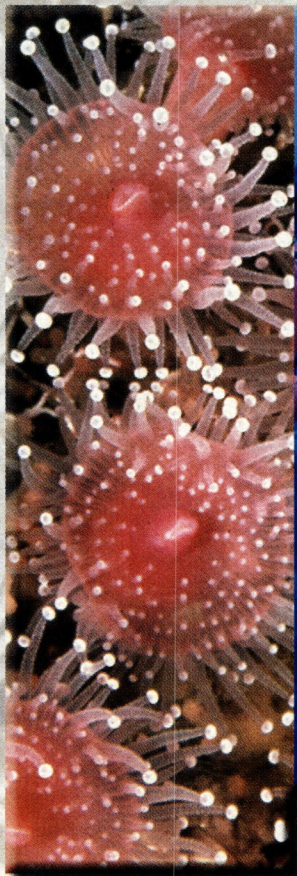
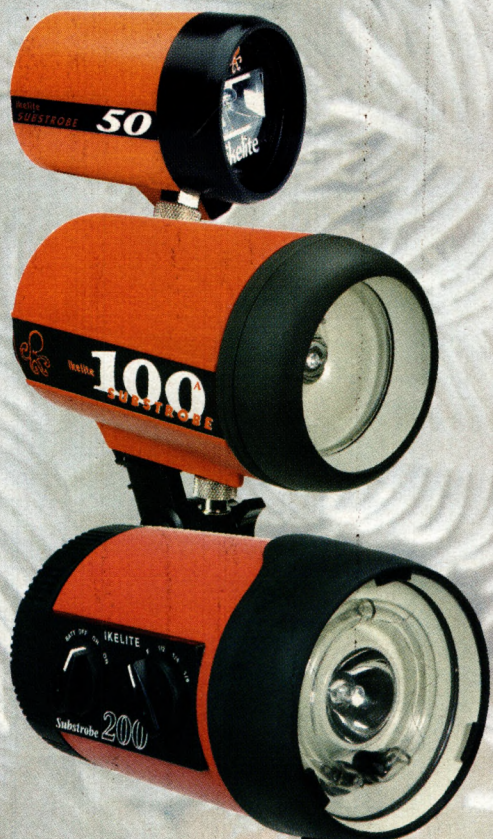
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Designed and built in the USA for both the professional and amateur photographer, Ikelite offers six models of underwater strobes to meet different needs and budgets.

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Substrobe 200 (TTL) offers state-of-the-art electronics, 200 watt-sec., an incredible 1.6 sec. recycle time and ultra-wide 100° coverage. Soft-Lite reflector and built-in modeling light. Ni-cad batteries deliver 160+ flashes and recharge in 2.5 hrs. LED film gauge shows number of rolls of film that can be exposed with remaining charge.

Substrobe 400 (TTL) is the most powerful strobe offered, producing 400 watt-sec. and covering 110°. Especially suited for wide angle photography. Soft-Lite reflector, built-in modeling light. Ni-cad module delivers 150+ flashes.

¹ Soft-Lite reflector provides rich reds, oranges and warmer flesh tones.

Light



TTL Slave

Most avid photographers use two strobes for more natural lighting and this remarkable device eliminates the need for a dual cord. Full TTL functions are provided through slave sensors enabling the second strobe to be moved freely and positioned virtually anywhere without the inconvenience of a connecting cord.

Connects only to Ikelite Substrobes.

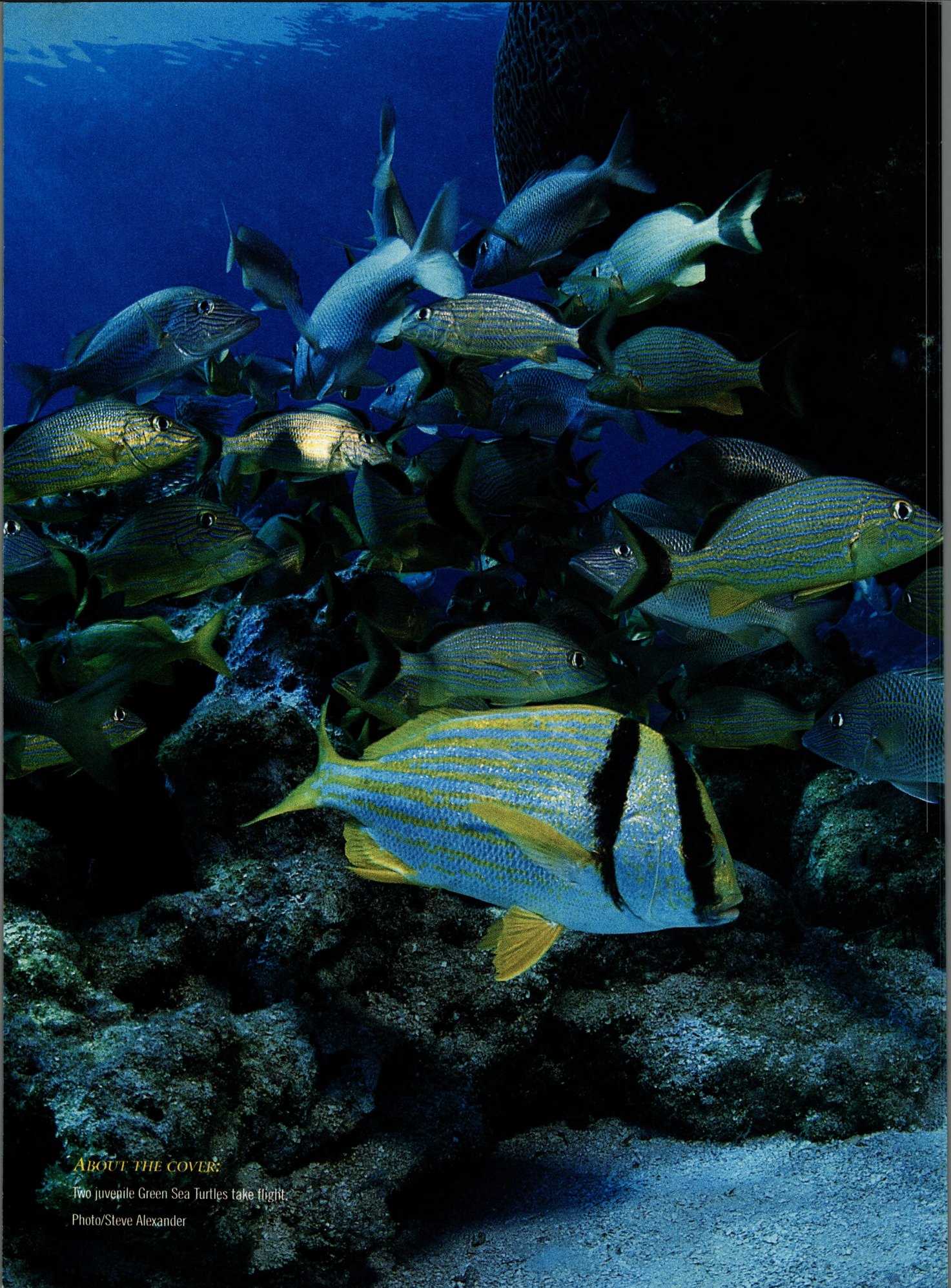
Digital Meter

The DM 4200 is both a light and a flash meter.

A light meter is one of the most important tools a photographer can own. The key to great underwater photographs is the balance between available light and fill flash. The photographer must start with a meter reading of the available light to properly set the camera aperture. Then the proper strobe power and strobe-to-subject distance can be selected. Use a light meter to achieve balanced lighting and your acceptable photographs can become great photographs.



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ABOUT THE COVER:

Two juvenile Green Sea Turtles take flight.

Photo/Steve Alexander

FEATURES



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70



78



84

52 YOUR FIRST UNDERWATER CAMERA

The photographic trinity is camera, strobe and film. JACK AND SUE DRAFAHL catechize the newly converted on equipment configurations for all the must-have shots.

62 THE OL' NAVY SHAKEDOWN

Saved from the scrap heap, the *Spiegel Grove* takes FRED D. GARTH on a mission to find a new home in the Florida Keys. Along the way he meets some old friends, makes some new ones and discovers that all that's best is wet.

70 TALES FROM THE WALL SIDE

MATT AND ANGELA WEEDON take us to the Turks & Caicos, where the wall dives alone will transport divers to a place history has forgotten.

78 CAYMAN EXTREME

It used to be that if "tek" and "Cayman" collided in the same sentence there was a good possibility hallucinogenics were involved. But in the new millennium, FRED D. GARTH reports that deep dives, rebreathers and, yes, even trimix are available in diving's mecca, the Cayman Islands.

84 WESTERN MICRONESIA

Long before BRAD DOANE or ERIC HANAUER ever made it to the far flung outposts of the Pacific, (Palau, Truk, Yap, Guam, Saipan, Tinian, Rota) they knew what to expect—big animals, an obscene amount of coral, a profuse number of fish and massive war wrecks. You know what? It still blew them away.

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Searching

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Diving's Latest News

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Background photo: Grunts gathering above a coral bed in the Florida Keys.

Photo/Tom and Therisa Stack

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Skin Diver ON LOCATION



CAYMAN ISLANDS

The few divers that train and equip themselves to push past the familiar limits of 130 feet and no-decompression have a new playground in the Caribbean—the Cayman Islands.

For all of those who have associated tek diving with cold, dark shipwrecks off the New Jersey coast, the Cayman Islands offer up the *Carrie Lee*. She is immersed in warm, clear waters where the viz, even at 200 feet deep, still allows a view of the clouds. Add to this four-hour wall dives on silent rebreathers and scooter dives that take all the work out of swimming with a triple tank rig, and it's easy to see why tek divers are starting to call their travel agents and utter the most amazing words: "I need a flight to Cayman."

Push the limits in paradise on page 78.



FLORIDA KEYS

"Eclectic" is perhaps the best word to describe the Florida

Keys, except that nobody in the Keys would dare use that word themselves. It's too polished, too refined. Suffice it to say that whether you're looking topside or beneath the surface, the Keys offer a wide variety of settings, characters and dramas to entertain its guests.

These qualities are also responsible for enticing some visitors to prolong their stays indefinitely. The only question for them is, "Where to settle down?" For an old salty dog, the possibilities run the length of the overseas highway and then some.

Cruise the Keys and find a home on page 62.



TURKS AND CAICOS

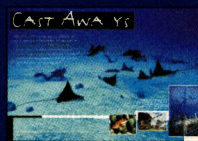
From South Florida, head east until you hit the Bahamas and then hang a right, following

the island chain down to the triple paradise of the Turks and Caicos. You'll find a place where everyday is yesterday.

The buildings, the people, the diving. They all have a charm and quality not found in the

"modern" world. The underwater scenery is defined by sheer drops-offs, walls that plunge into the abyss and are covered with a tapestry of life so thick it appears to have always been there.

Slip over the edge on page 70.



WESTERN MICRONESIA

This stretch of the South Pacific inspires a kind of gooey romanticism in

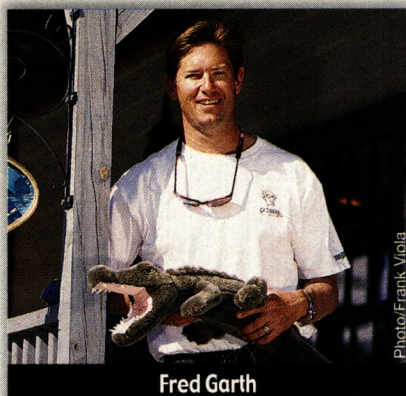
divers (think Cousteau meets Fabio) that survives few other places in the world. Perhaps this phenomenon is the human response to a landscape that overwhelms the senses. Tiny dots of islands surrounded by thousands of square miles of ocean serve as a reflection of the vast emptiness of the soul juxtaposed against the utter confusion of brilliant life that lies just beneath the surface of the waves.

Got that? Good, now pack your dive gear and a Danielle Steel paperback and go see it for yourself. The journey begins on page 84.

CONTRIBUTORS

DESPITE FLORIDA'S EMBARRASSING backwater voting system, Fred Garth still likes living there. "The beaches don't have hypodermic needles, the diving is great, and I can hardly wait to take advantage of all those senior citizen discounts," Garth said.

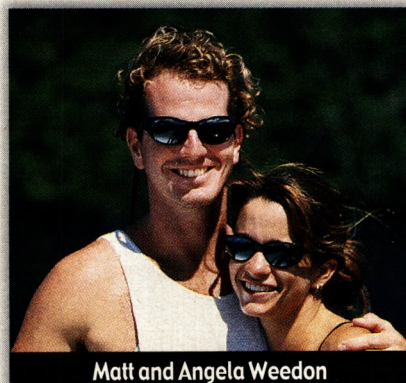
To write "The Old Navy Shake-down," he left Pensacola, Florida, and headed south to the Keys. Much to his amazement, he made it all the way to Key West and back with a few bucks left over. Garth owes a special thanks to Ramone—the hitchhiker he picked up and who pitched in on gas. 🐟



Fred Garth

Photo/Frank Viola

AFTER LIVING IN THE TURKS AND CAICOS and Palau for several years, Matt and Angela Weedon have landlocked themselves in Dallas, Texas. So, a return trip to the Turks and Caicos rekindled many fond memories—water, beaches, diving, ocean breezes. And, it was also six years earlier that they first met on South Caicos Island. Putting their romantic notions aside (at least for a while), they managed to rejuvenate with a week of killer diving and give *Skin Diver* a full report in "Tales From the Wall Side." 🐟



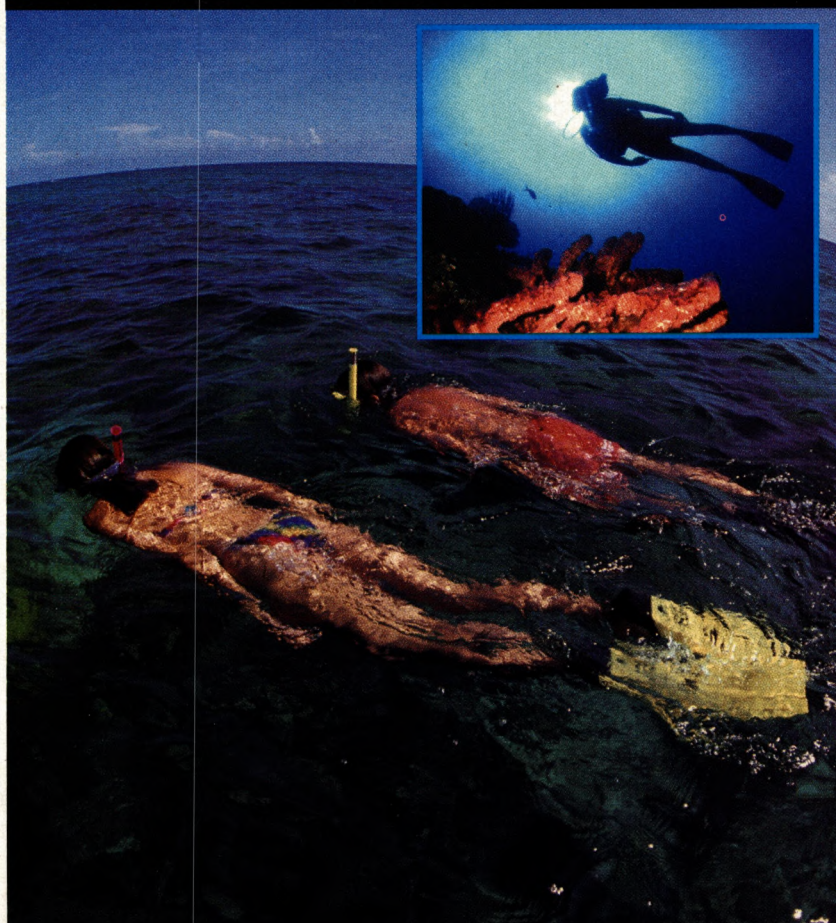
Matt and Angela Weedon

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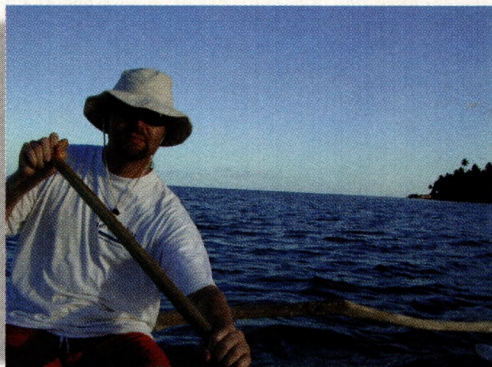
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IMAGINE SEARCHING FOR YOUR FINAL RESTING PLACE. WHERE would you look? The Florida Keys? A retired Navy vet named *Spiegel Grove* did. And what'd he look for? SG seemed to think a sandy bottom (not too deep) would be nice, a place where he could settle in and live life on an even keel, maybe even near a colorful reef. That way he could still entertain visiting dignitaries the way he did during his distinguished naval career. Perhaps he could also take on a few lodgers for company as time wears on. It's a tough decision, so SG had to search the Keys all the way from Biscayne Bay to the tippy end of Key West—give the

place the "Old Navy Shakedown." Fred Garth sort of took him by the hand, showed him a few good spots. And in the end...well, you'll just have to turn to page 62 for the big decision.

And, after helping out the old guy, Fred wanted to find a longtime dream girl named *Carrie Lee*. He'd been obsessing over her for the better part of 10 years, so we put our dating service to

Searching

task and sent Fred off. The last he heard *Carrie Lee* was down in the Cayman Islands. *Way down*. And, that was the problem. *Way down* in the Cayman Islands used to be a hard place to get to. Not anymore—the islands, world-famous for their sport diving, have now gone tek in a big way. So Fred finally got to spend some time

with his old flame. According to his side of the story, the encounter was true bliss.

But Fred doesn't get to have all the fun. For those of you who don't spend your free time making custom decompression tables for your next trimix dive, and like things the way they used to be, we sent Matt and Angela Weedon off to report on the exhilarating, plunging wall lines off the Turks & Caicos. They found the diving to be pristine as ever (most of it accompanied by the whalesong of passing Humpbacks), and the islands lost in time. From the quaint colonial architecture to the occasional passing donkey, there was hardly a need to search out the past here—even the very timbers from the ships that first landed on the ghost-white beaches of this island nation went into the structure of the B & B in which they were staying.

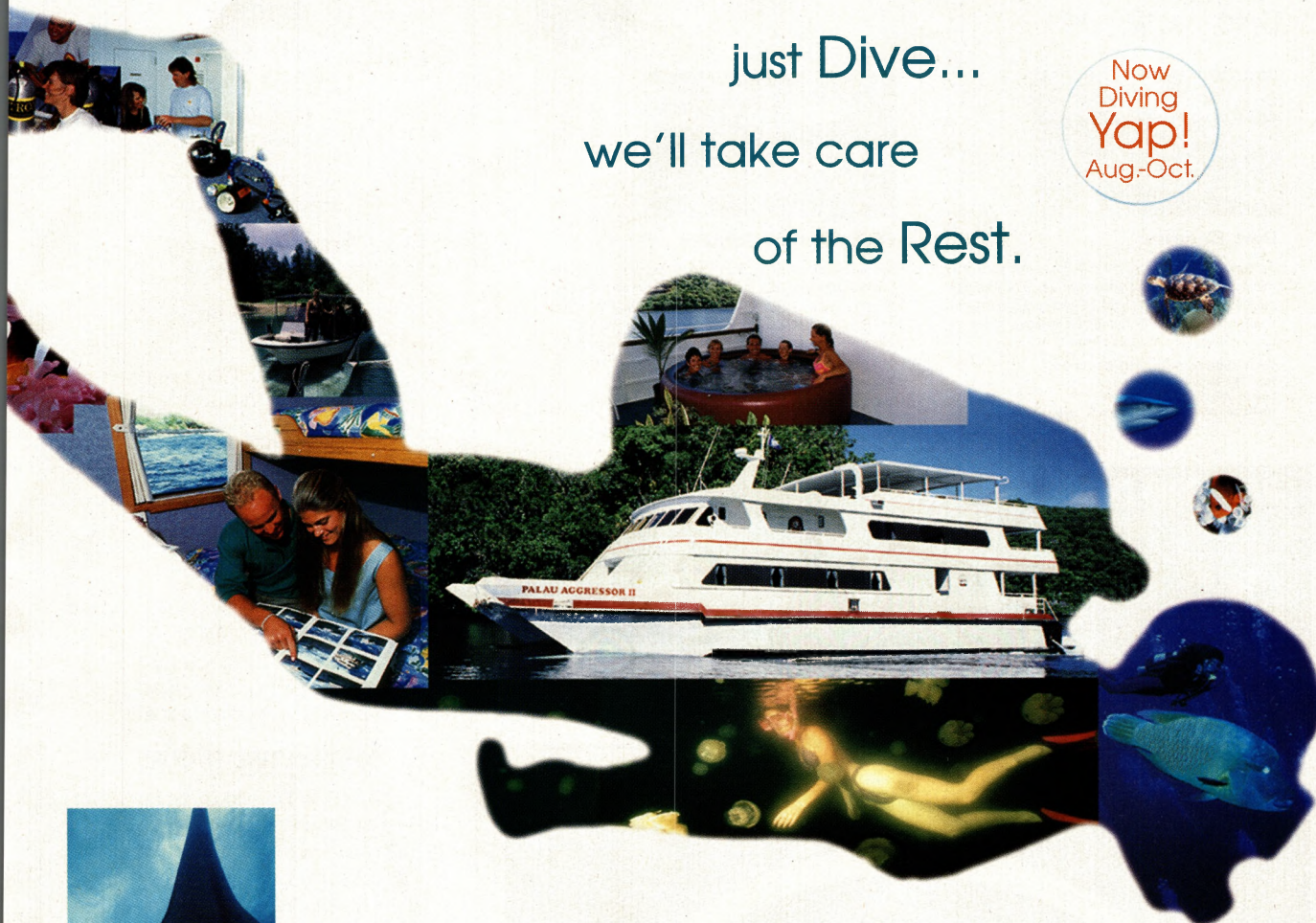
And finally, if you're searching for history mixed with the wild side of discovery, Brad Doane and Eric Hanauer found it. It's spread out over thousands of square miles of the Pacific Ocean in the blue wilderness of Western Micronesia. And, like all true dive adventurers, they came back from their travels with a new experience or two. Which, in the end, is what we divers all search for, even in places we've been to a million times. 🐠

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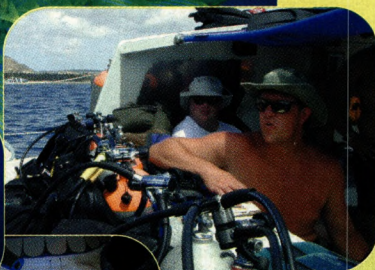
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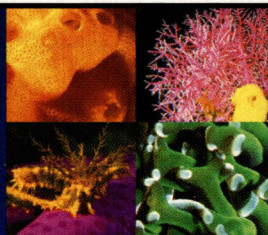
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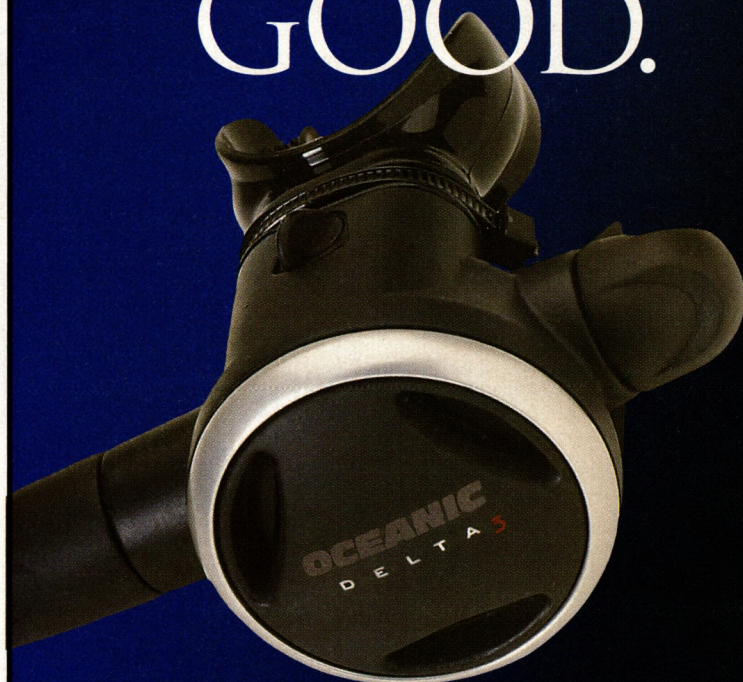
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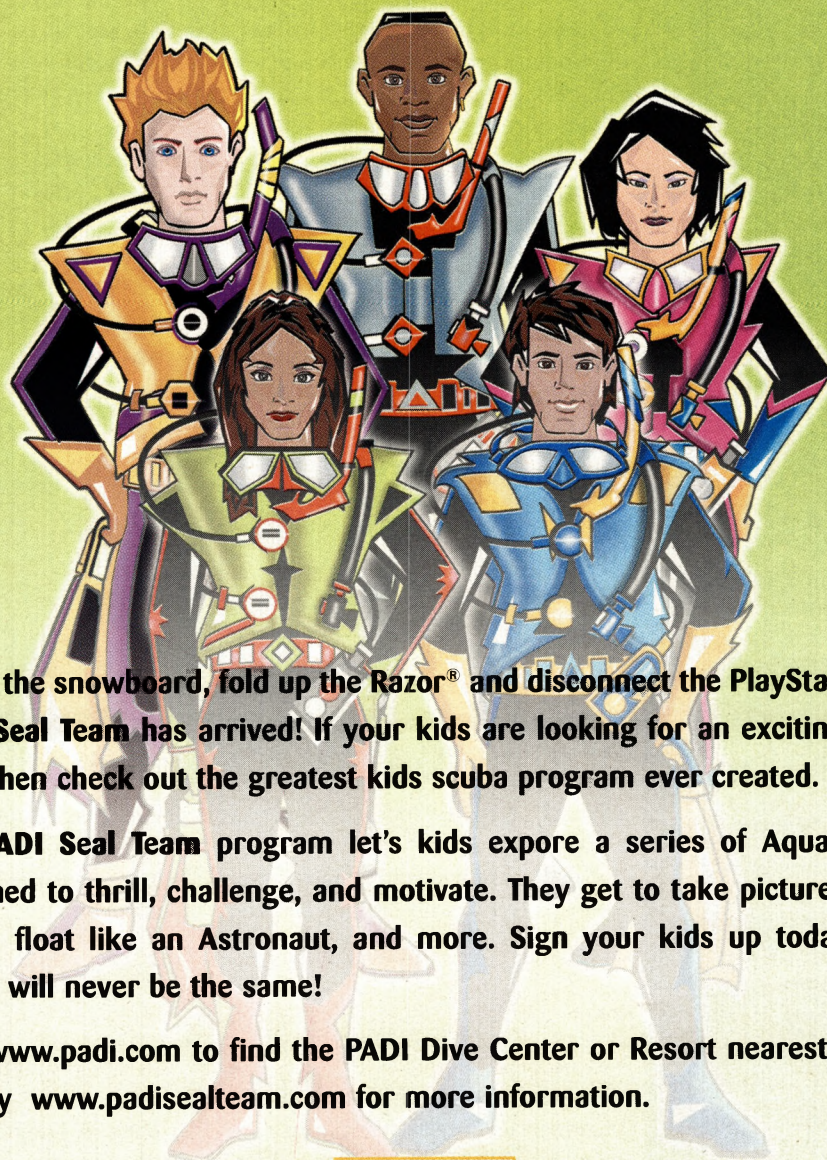
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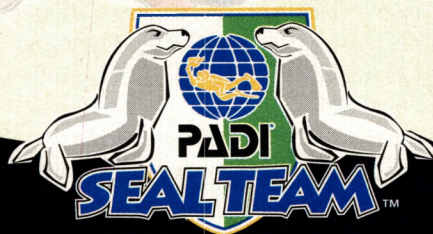
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Ten of World's Leading Ocean Champions Named Pew Marine Conservation Fellows

\$1.5 Million Conferred in World's Only Award Dedicated to Preservation of the Sea

An Italian biologist investigating the cause of mysterious dolphin deaths in the Mediterranean, an American fisheries extension specialist determined to protect the environment from the dangers of genetically modified marine organisms, and a Russian lawyer challenging oil and gas development threatening biodiversity in the Caspian Sea are among 10 guardians of the oceans selected as 2001 Pew Marine Conservation Fellows.

The prestigious fellowships are the world's only prize dedicated to marine conservation. The recipients have each been awarded \$150,000 from the Pew Fellows Program in Marine Conservation, an initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts operated in partnership with the New England Aquarium.

"The Pew Fellows Program recognizes exemplary individuals with unique vision, exceptional problem-solving skills, and innovative ideas to advance marine conservation," said Cynthia Robinson, Associate Director of the program.

"Although from diverse backgrounds and locations, the 2001 Pew Fellows are united by their leadership in applying and communicating sound science to effect positive change for the sea."

The 2001 Pew Marine Conservation Fellows are: Alex Aguilar, Ph.D. (Spain), Giovanni Bearzi, Dr. BioSc. (Italy), Anthony T. Charles, Ph.D. (Canada), Felicia C. Coleman, Ph.D. (USA), Edgardo D. Gomez, Ph.D. (Philippines), Anne R. Kapuscinski, Ph.D. (USA), Jessica C. Landman, J.D. (USA), Vera L. Mischenko, J.D., Ph.D. (Russia), Carl J. Walters, Ph.D. (Canada), Alan T. White, Ph.D. (Philippines).

16 www.skin-diver.com

Records Are Made...to Be Broken

PIPIN FERRERAS AND AUDREY MESTRE-FERRERAS—the current freediving World Champions in the Male and Female (respectively) No Limits categories—will attempt to break their own mixed tandem dive record of 115 meters, by descending to 116 meters on May 18 at OceanFest 2001.

The town of Ft. Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, Florida, is once again hosting OceanFest, from May 18 to 20. As in previous years, this consumer show will offer diving related exhibits, seminars, contests, diving activities and entertainment.

For further information call (954) 776-1000, or visit www.oceanfest.com.

Photo: Ferreras and Mestre-Ferreras doing a demonstration tandem dive.



Photo/Ron Everdij

TRAVEL ADVISORY:

Sabah. Malaysian Borneo is Safe

"TRAVEL IN SABAH, MALAYSIAN BORNEO, is safe." That's the message tourism operators are trying to get out to potential visitors. A recent statement by the Sabah Tourism Board proclaimed that the ethnic crises in Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo, do not affect the safe and peaceful environment in the Malaysian Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak.

Sabah is in the northern-most part of Borneo. There is no land or air access

between Sabah and the Indonesian Kalimantan, isolating it from Sabah, as if it is in "another continent." According to the

board, the Indonesian Kalimantan clashes do not affect Malaysian Borneo.

Foreign visitors have continued to come into the area, both on business and for vacations. and Sabah is welcoming

the increasing number of international arrivals with open arms.

For more information, visit www.sabah-tourism.com.



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Celebrity Sail—June 2

James Cameron will be the honorary chairman for a celebrity sailboat race, taking place in Marina del Rey, California. Proceeds will benefit the Planetary Coral Reef Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the world's threatened coral reefs.

For more information and tickets, contact Lisa Precious at (818) 985-6220 or visit www.pcrf.org.

Scuba Show 2001—June 2 & 3

Held at the Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach, California, the 14th Annual Scuba Show will feature exhibits, films and seminars.

Contact: (310) 792-2333 or visit www.saintbrendan.com.

Oceans Benefit Dinner—June 9

The San Diego Oceans Foundation will present the Oceans Benefit 2001

"I WANT TO SEE FISH!" HAILEY EXCLAIMED AS SHE RAISED HER HEAD FROM THE WATER. THIS WAS HER FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH THE SASY (Supplied Air Snorkeling for Youth) unit that had been donated for her use by SCUBAPRO through Oceans for Youth—a non-profit foundation designed to encourage underwater education. The organization's president, Wayne Hasson, is also the inventor of the SASY and SASA (Supplied Air Snorkeling for Adults) units. He took a personal interest in Hailey after meeting and talking with her aunt and uncle who were on holiday in the Cayman Islands last summer.

Hailey Dawn Mathis is a beautiful, enthusiastic and energetic 16-year-old girl. She is a typical teenager—she likes shopping and boys. But instead of worrying about passing driver's ed. and making the cheerleading squad, Hailey struggles with day-to-day challenges as a quadriplegic. On May 3, 1999, a killer tornado ripped through central Oklahoma and left her buried in the rubble that was once her home near Oklahoma City.

SASY Provides New Type of Physical Therapy

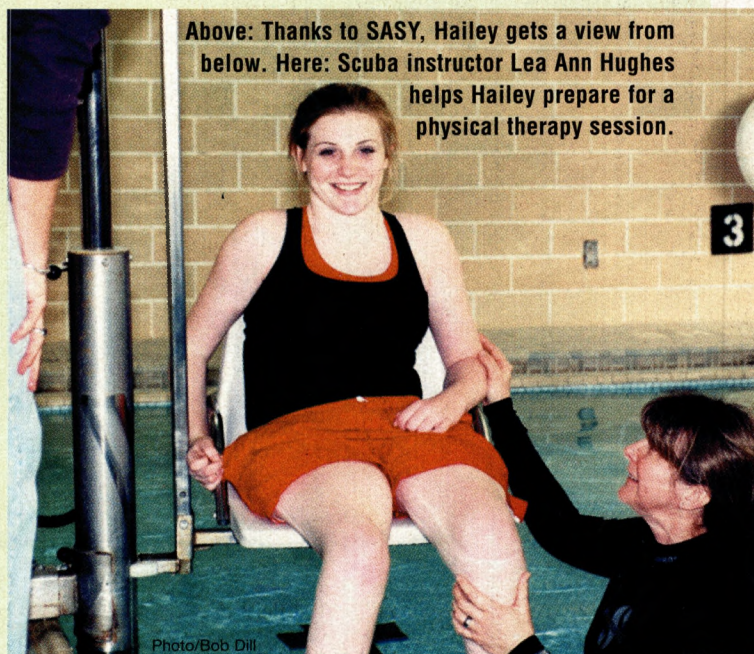
Taking shelter in the bathtub of her home and covering herself with a mattress for protection, Hailey was found underneath mounds of rubble, alive, but seriously injured. The tragedy left her paralyzed from the chest down, with no movement in her legs and only partial movement in her arms.

The many months of physical therapy have been difficult and discouraging at times. However, the new SASY unit has opened up a whole new realm of possibilities to Hailey, and a new and fun type of physical therapy. SASY allows the user to lie on the surface of the water breathing air from a small scuba cylinder through a regulator mouth-piece. SASY is designed so that it is impossible to submerge with the device, making it ideal for small children who are too young for scuba, adults who have difficulty snorkeling on the surface, and for people like Hailey who have physical challenges that prevent them from snorkeling and scuba diving.

Lea Ann Hughes, a scuba instructor with Oklahoma Scuba in Norman, Oklahoma, has been Hailey's guide in learning to use SASY and mastering the skills required to use the unit. PADI has designated Hailey to be the recipient of their first SASY certification card and hopefully, in the very near future, Hailey will be able to fulfill her wish of seeing fish in open water. 🐟



Photo/Alan Hughes



Above: Thanks to SASY, Hailey gets a view from below. Here: Scuba instructor Lea Ann Hughes helps Hailey prepare for a physical therapy session.

Photo/Bob Dill

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Banquet on June 9, at the Wyndham San Diego Emerald Plaza. This foundation leads community-supported projects that enhance ocean habitat and encourage sustainable use of ocean resources.

Contact: (619) 523-1903, or visit www.sdoceans.org.

SEASPACE 2001—June 9 to 10

The SEASPACE scuba show will be

held in Houston, Texas at the Reliant Arena, and will feature exhibits, seminars and more.

To learn more, visit www.seaspace.org.

Bonaire Dive Festival—June 9 to 16

The festival will focus on coral conservation while offering a variety of activities, seminars and parties.

Contact: (800) BONAIRE, or visit www.infobonaire.com.

Dive Seekers International Photographic Shoot-out—June 14 to 24

An opportunity to work with some of the world's top underwater photographers in Layang Layang, situated in Malaysia.

Contact: (011) 790-0000, or e-mail lynd@seekers.co.za.

To submit a dive-related event for our Happenings section, e-mail allenr@emapusa.com.

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 - Repatriation of remains to home county
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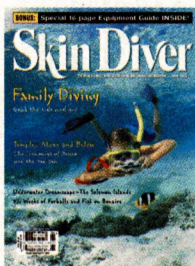
Readers Speak Out

It's a Family Affair

I can't even begin to tell you how informative and inspirational your recent Family Diving issue (April 2001) was to my husband and me. When we first married, we were avid divers and even spent our honeymoon at Glover's Reef in Belize. Now, we have two sons (ages 4 and 6½), and we have not been scuba diving in over seven years.

I was particularly impressed by the article, "A Fantastic Journey." We've decided to plan our next vacation to include diving—and the boys. And a special thanks for the suggestions as to places that offer services for children as well as adults.

—Luci Bennet, Lansing, IL



Tourism Apartheid

A friend gave me a copy of your March 2001 issue. It contains a story on Cuba by Clay and Martha Wiseman ("Castro's Little Secret," pg. 54). I enjoyed it very much, especially the wonderful photographs. The story brought good memories of my own experiences in Cuba. I am Cuban, and I lived on the island for 30 years before coming to the USA. I have been freediving since I was 10 years old, so I am very familiar with the crystal-clear waters and multicolored coral reefs the Wisemans describe.

I do not want to sound negative, and I realize your magazine is not involved in politics, but there are some issues your readers should be aware of. Ordinary Cubans cannot enjoy what



the Wisemans experienced. Ordinary Cubans cannot buy diving equipment, cannot get a room at the Hotel Colony, dive the beautiful reefs around Isla de la Juventud or dine on fresh lobster. It is not because they are poor and cannot afford it, but because they are not allowed by the government.

There are two Cubas: one for foreigners, another one for ordinary Cubans even if they have U.S. dollars. There are buildings, areas and resorts, even entire islands, where Cubans are not allowed. We call it "tourism apartheid." Foreign tourists who visit Cuba are unwillingly collaborating with this unfair policy.

—Sebastian Arcos, via e-mail

The World is Watching

I took notice of your article, "Triumph of the Whales" (Freeflow, March 2001). After 200 years of whaling decimat-

ed the populations of the world's whales, two nations of the world (Norway and Japan) continue to hunt and kill whales under the disguise of "research whaling."

Commercial whaling by these countries are targeting Minke Whales, Baleen Whales, Sperm Whales, Beaked Whales, Gray Whales, Humpback Whales and dolphins. Using loopholes in the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW), the treaty governing the International Whaling Commission (IWC), Japan has now engaged in so-called "scientific" whaling despite repeated objections by the IWC.

I've heard that the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo, Japan, is selling whale soup (considered a delicacy), and whale meat often sells for more than \$100 per pound. This should make anyone immediately take notice of Norway and Japan's real motives behind these whale hunts.

—Gerald Steven Tlapa, Los Angeles, CA



Teach Not, Want Not

I just received the March edition of *Skin Diver* magazine and was disturbed to read the article entitled "Touch Me Not." It is a tragedy that people are not properly educated in regards to the ecosystem. Perhaps when Mr. Fouts learned to dive in the 1970s, people thought nothing of plundering the seas' resources. But if we all had that mentality, then the already suffering coral and sponge population would be non-existent.

I implore all scuba divers and snorkelers to enjoy the beauty our seas and oceans have to offer, but please do not touch or remove anything. I am quite sure we would all love to behold the oceans' treasures untouched and unspoiled for many generations to come.

—Janet H. Bartow, Ottsville, PA

It's Not About How Deep You Go

I recently came across a copy of *Skin Diver* magazine and was really impressed. However, I was hoping to see more articles on snorkeling, since that was something I tried for the first time while on vacation in Hawaii last October.

That first time looking underwater at Hanauma Bay, Oahu, was so exciting—I was totally unprepared for my reaction! Please consider more articles on snorkeling techniques and gear, and featuring well-known as well as more remote spots to have great snorkeling experiences.

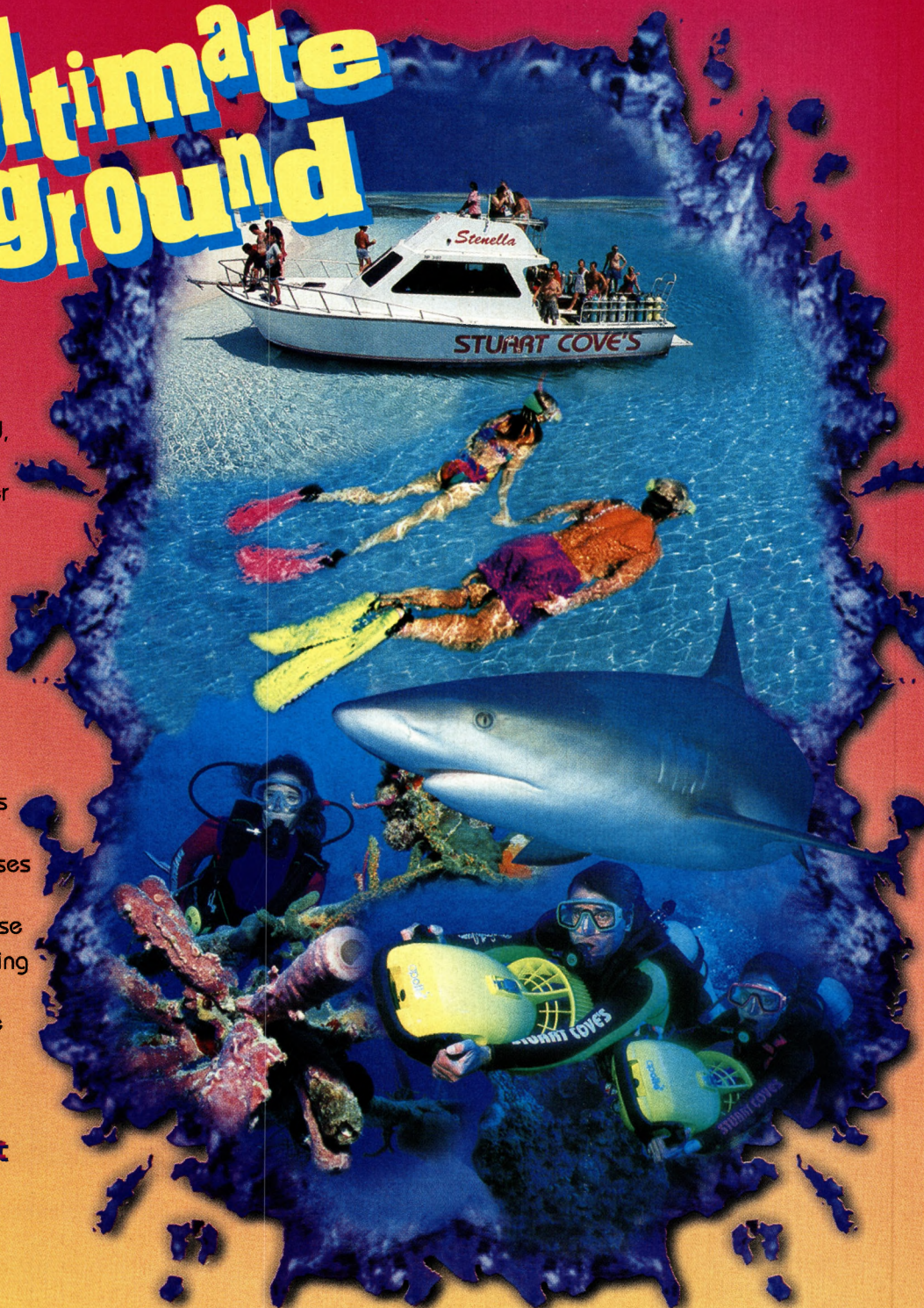
—Susan Cline, via e-mail

Tell us what you think. Send your thoughts by e-mail to skin-diver@emapusa.com, the website at www.skin-diver.com or via snail-mail to Letters to the Editor, *Skin Diver*, 6420 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90048.

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Let's Explore—But Softly

BY JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU



Photo/Geri Murphy

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR, A specially convened President's Panel on Ocean Exploration within the U.S. Commerce Department issued an ex-

Yet while the report could be a bold and positive step forward, it could just as easily become another gold rush.

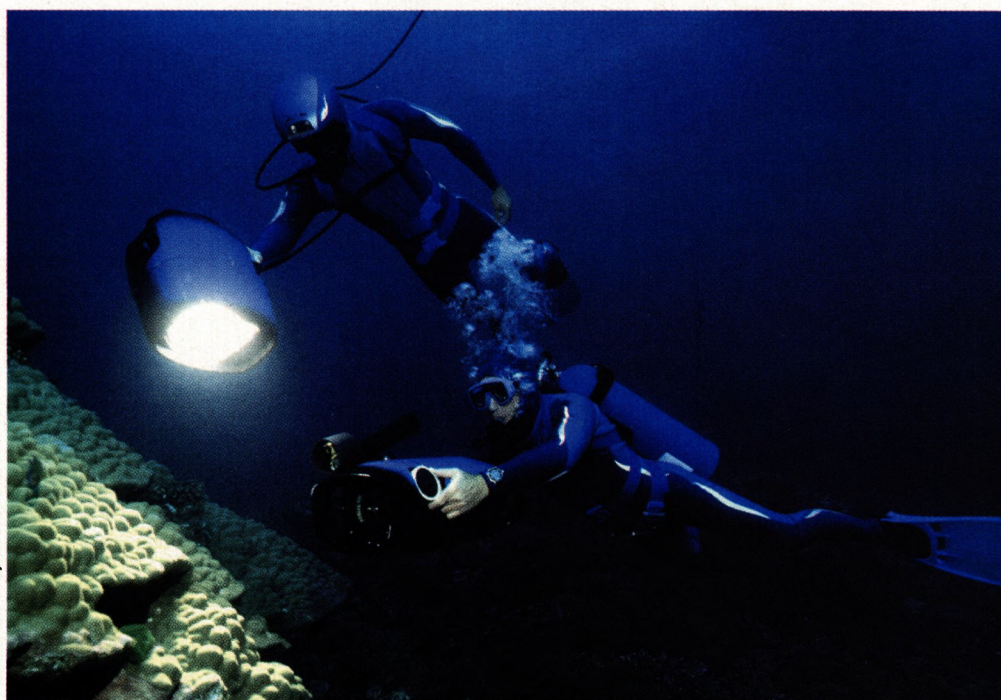
In the world's rainforests, human activities are killing off ecosystems before we have a chance to fully know them, to understand how they work and to derive a benefit from the services they provide. Recent discoveries of new deep-sea species suggest that the same process may befall the oceans unless we protect its vitality.

As the world's preeminent maritime power, it is essential that the U.S. be involved. But it is also essential that it be involved wisely.

While the Americans have focused on space, Canada, England, Australia, and even Ireland and New Zealand have

launched undersea endeavors using the latest technological advances. Only five percent of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) has been mapped in a high-resolution format, less than other maritime states. The panel wants to explore this highly valuable resource using multibeam sonar, remote-sensing arrays and other information-gathering gadgetry. Meanwhile, a multi-year "Signature Mission" will send a research vessel to the South Seas, the Arctic and back.

Coordinated marine research, drawing upon related fields of chemistry, geology, engineering and



Photo/Tom Ordway

Ocean exploration has taken a backseat to space exploration. But that's all about to change. Here, two of Cousteau's researchers inspect coral for the *Cities Under the Sea Encyclopedia*.

citing document. "Discovering Earth's Final Frontier" called for a bold new commitment to ocean exploration.

It's about time.

Forty years ago, space and ocean exploration were both plunging into unknown realms at about the same pace. But today, thanks to shuttles, the Hubble telescope, the Mars landings and other breakthroughs, space exploration has progressed beyond our wildest dreams, while our knowledge of Earth's oceans has lagged behind. This makes it extremely important to give this effort all possible encouragement.

others, would provide the proper intellectual foundation for understanding the workings of a planet that seems better measured, yet less well-known, every day.

In many ways, the Panel conceives of its new plan as a vast educational enterprise, aiming at nothing less than "to improve the science competency of America's school-children, and to realize the full potential of a citizenry aware and informed of ocean issues."

It sounds lovely, but we must also be cautious. While the report recognizes the Marine Protected Area guidelines established by the World Conservation Union to safeguard fragile marine habitats, its motives are not completely altruistic.

A major goal of the U.S. effort—produced by the Commerce Department—is to ascertain what undiscovered benefits for industry lie within territorial waters. "Stakeholders" such as the petroleum, pharmaceutical and fishing industries all stand to gain. And the report makes no secret of their

other frontiers, be it space or pharmaceuticals or genetics, the zeal to exploit new riches often outpaces the legal frameworks that protect the rights of individuals and the viability of ecosystems. We must make sure this does

As divers, we should be encouraged by the move forward in oceanic research. However, we should be wary of it as well.



Photo: Matt Weedon

not happen with oceanic research.

Thankfully, there are a few signs that the Panel is aware of this danger.

The report recommends that a portion of the proceeds from ocean exploitation be earmarked for research on the environmentally sustainable use of marine products. Time will tell whether this is a new way to sustainably manage domestic marine resources or a mere boilerplate.

Overall, the U.S. plan to put a sizable portion of its vast resources towards the exploration of the oceans is to be welcomed. In an age of increasingly complex environmental challenges, its contribution is essential not just to understanding the oceans, but to protecting them.

In the spirit of its enterprise, more than the letter, the Panel has recognized that marine science is essential not only to one country's prosperity, but to everyone's survival. 🐟

After all, most of the relevant technology for exploration has been developed...by the offshore oil industry.

involvement, both as participants in information gathering and as its beneficiaries.

Clearly, the grand enterprise will be impossible without industry support, both financial and material. After all, most of the relevant technology for exploration has been developed not by the government or scientific agencies, but by the offshore oil industry.

As we have seen on the fringes of

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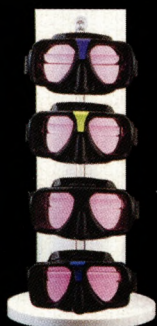
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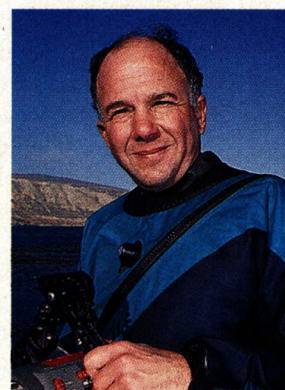


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To House or Not to House

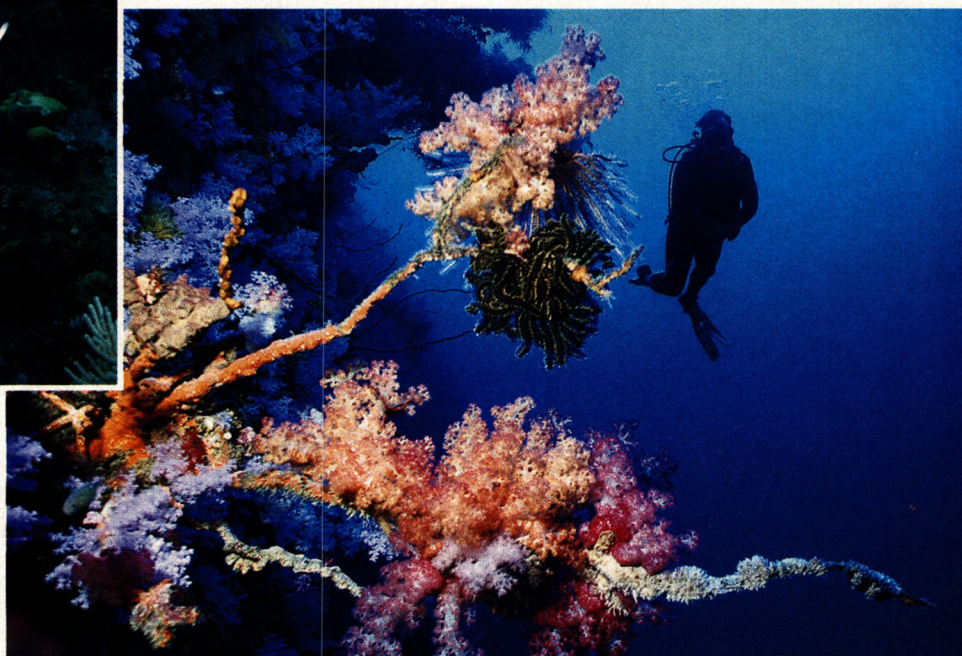
BY MARTY SNYDERMAN



During the last five years I have used both a MotorMarine II-EX and a Nikonos V. I am now thinking about buying an SLR camera and putting it into a housing. Do you think that is a good idea? —Harry, Enid, OK



SLR systems offer a lot of versatility. Above: A photographer uses a housed SLR to capture small pillar coral in Fiji. Right: This shot of a Fijian seascape was taken with a housed SLR system.



DIFFERENT PHOTOGRAPHERS MAKE THE move to a housed single lens reflex (SLR) camera for a variety of reasons. In some cases, photographers are not satisfied with the quality of the images they are creating and believe a housed SLR camera system will enable them to improve their work. While the Motormarine II-EX and Nikonos V can produce excellent quality images (both macro and wide-angle), shooters looking to expand their range may find these camera systems sometimes limiting. These systems do a great job with the right size subjects in a given situa-

tion, but they lack flexibility underwater. Photographers thinking about changing to a housed SLR may want the flexibility of a wider selection of lenses available with SLR product lines such as Nikon, Olympus, Minolta and Canon cameras.

But given these and other reasons, it really isn't possible for me to definitely state whether Harry, or any other photographer, should or should not make the move to a housed SLR system. However, I can provide Harry, and other photographers like him, with some food for thought.

Many people make the move to a SLR system in order to make it easier to create full-frame, compelling images of reef creatures that vary in size from shrimp to big lobsters. To consistently produce high-quality images of subjects in this size range you will want to work with a lens, or lenses, in the 50 mm to 105 mm range.

Others might make the move to housed SLRs to create compelling medium-format and wide-angle imagery by taking advantage of the wide selection of lenses of different focal lengths that are available for high-quality SLR cameras.

Perhaps the biggest advantages of SLR systems are the ability to “see and confirm” focus and to compose precisely. With the guesswork minimized, you have a chance to be in near total control of the photographs you produce. With some experience under your weightbelt, you can achieve razor-sharp focus with an SLR system. And, while the viewfinders of most SLRs don’t allow you to see 100 percent of the frame you will record, there is much less guessing involved. In addition, the built-in light metering systems of most SLRs are deadly accurate—a big help in exposing sunlit backgrounds and strobe-lit foreground subjects when using the TTL exposure mode.

There are, however, some disad-

vantages in the SLR world. An SLR system, which consists primarily of a camera, housing, several ports and a variety of lenses, is usually considerably more expensive than a rangefinder-based system (ie. Motor-Marine, Nikonos). An SLR system is typically bigger, heavier and a little more of a “handful” underwater. I often feel that I can deal with big, fast moving animals better with a rangefinder, and they are often easier to work with when currents are running. So, despite being an SLR owner, I haven’t tossed my rangefinders. Being larger, a typical SLR system requires more space when traveling, and necessitates a little more planning and cooperation in getting the system into and out of

the water. In addition, a housed SLR system usually takes a little longer to set up and break down.

Most professional shooters eventually end up using an SLR system. Often, they do so because for them, the advantages of improved picture quality, control over their images and flexibility outweigh the disadvantages of increased cost, bulk and time spent setting up and breaking down their systems. However, many hobbyists get along just fine for years without using a housed SLR system. The final decision depends upon how seriously you take your underwater photography, the types of images you want to create and what kind of financial commitment you can afford to make. 🐠

Getting Started: Making Pictures of Little Critters

As a general rule, the manufacturers of point-and-shoot cameras make cameras equipped with fixed-focus lenses, which are designed to help you take photographs of medium-sized subjects. These cameras do a great job in this arena, but many photographers also want to create photographs of subjects that are the size of nudibranches, hermit crabs and seahorses. Unfortunately, you can’t take a high-quality, full-frame picture of a small subject without using an accessory, such as a close-up lens or a Sea & Sea macro lens.

The adapter lenses significantly alter the optical properties of the non-removable lenses that come standard with most point-and-shoot cameras. The accessory lenses available for cameras such as the SeaLife Reefmaster, 100 Epoque, Ikelite’s Aquashot 3 and Sea & Sea’s MX-5 move the focus in much closer to the lens. In many point-and-shoot cameras the standard lens is a fixed-focus lens, which means that the lens is preset to focus on subjects that are two to six feet away from the camera’s film plane. By adding some type of close-up accessory lens you move the focus to within a few inches. You’ll also need to remember that an accessory lens works in conjunction with the non-removable camera lens, and together they create an optical system that is focused for close-up work. So, check with the manufacturer about lens settings.

You will want to light small subjects with a strobe in order to properly expose the subject and to “paint in” colors that have been filtered out. The “automatic exposure” feature (TTL) works well in macro photography,

so getting good exposures is mostly a matter of remembering to properly set the TTL selector switch and correctly aiming your strobe.

Once you have the proper equipment, you’re ready to take some compelling images. Here’s a few tips:

- Fill a pleasing percentage of your frame with your subject.

- Get low and shoot upwards when you can. This often adds a dramatic appeal to subjects.

- Shoot subjects face first.

- When using wire framers that come with some close-up adapters, indent a little (somewhere between ¼ and ½ inch, as suggested by the manufacturer) when framing your subject.

- Look carefully at your subject for a flash of color. Aim your strobe so that the light strikes your subject while intensifying the burst of color.

Good luck and happy shooting! 🐠



Star coral polyps.



Seahorse.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY?

Take an online course at Marty Snyderman’s School of Underwater Photography at www.skin-diver.com. This comprehensive course consists of nine interactive classes taken at your convenience.



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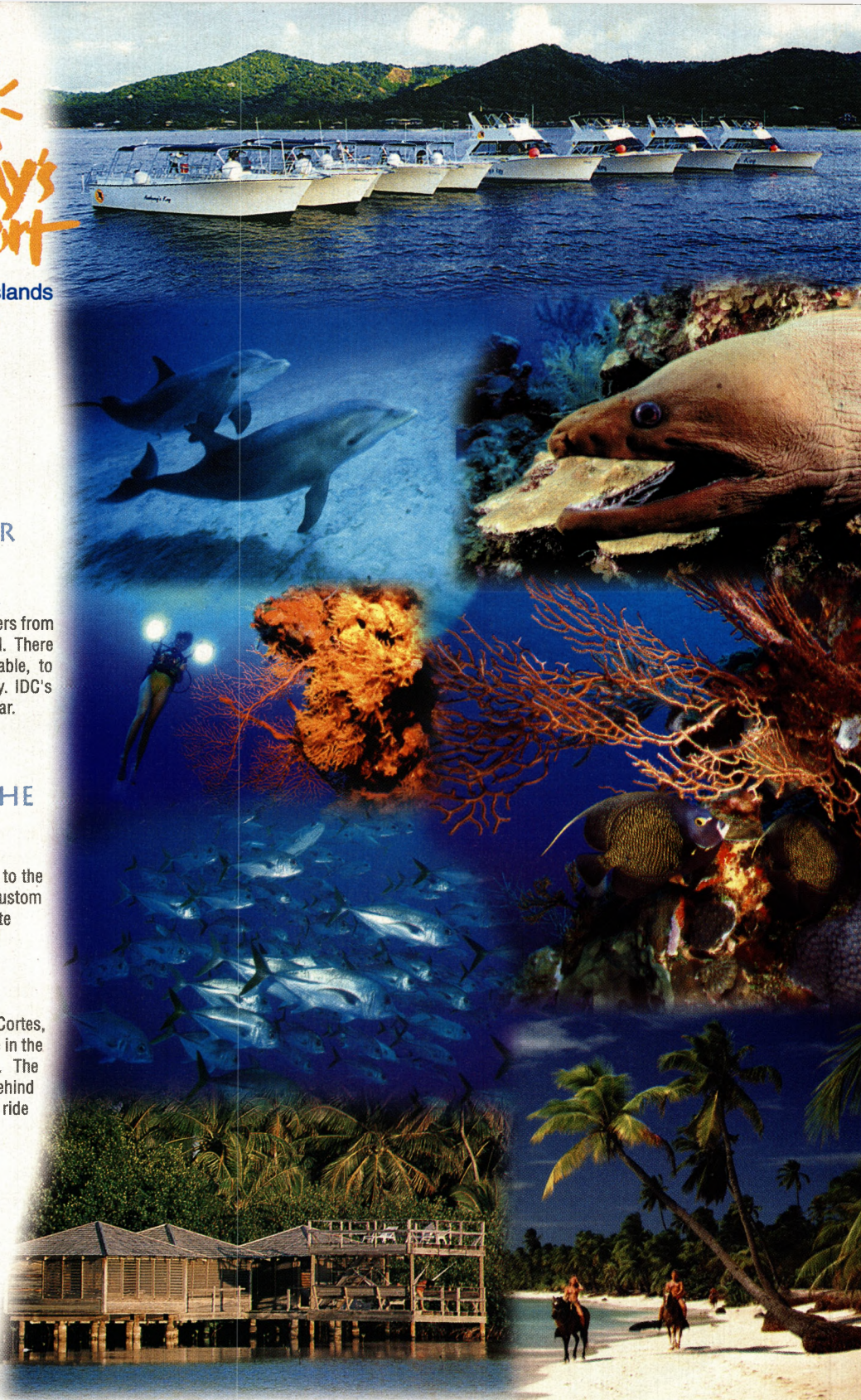
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gear and gadgets

by Ryan Allen & Daryl Carson

PELICAN NEMO 8C LIGHT

Although the photo may not do it justice, the real beauty of this slicked-up new light from Pelican is its size. A unique battery configuration allows the Nemo to swallow eight C-cells and still retain its dainty six C-cell figure.

But beauty has not come at the price of brawn. A newly designed magnetic switch eliminates extra holes (and potential failure points) in the body, which helps the Nemo attain its 500-foot depth rating. And, for those of you who have had trouble with earlier magnetic designs, the Nemo's switch can be easily removed for cleaning, so build up of magnetic material is never a problem.

The Xenon lamp produces 100,000 peak candlepower, and the computerized parabolic reflector has a focused yet wide beam. The spaceage polymer body features black thermoplastic over-molded accents and an "unbreakable" polycarbonate lens. **Pelican Products: (310) 326-4700 or (800) 473-5422, www.pelican.com**



SCUBAPRO TWIN JET FINS

Warm water divers who prefer full-foot fins have had few options when it comes to experiencing the split-fin design craze first hand.

But with the introduction of the new full-foot Twin Jets many are finally getting a taste of Nature's Wing technology.

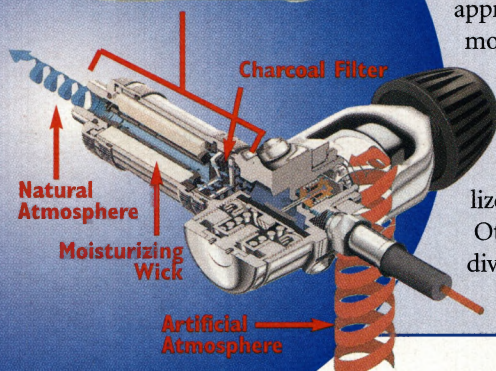
The design concept may be familiar to some, but the Twin Jets use an unconventional hydro-foil shape to produce forward motion with less effort than traditional blades. The design allows water to flow around each of the twin blades, producing propulsion in a manner similar to that found in a sail or wing. The foot pocket is angled to correspond to the natural posi-

tion of the lower leg and allows for symmetry between upstroke and downstroke of the kick, resulting in higher efficiency.

The fins are made from Monprene, which provides a well-struck balance between flexibility and snap. (The foot pocket is also made from Monprene, which I found to be quite comfortable.) SCUBAPRO has retained their trademark vents just below the foot pocket (a standard of the original Jet Fin) to increase water flow across the blade's surface. And, modest side rails help direct water flow directly behind the diver for increased thrust.

Notable features of the open-heel Twin Jets are an extended foot pocket for greater protection during shore entries and a rugged but easy to use quick release strap system. Also, foot pockets on the open-heel model run a little large, helping accommodate drysuit divers with bulky boots. **SCUBAPRO: (800) SCUBAPRO, www.scubapro.com**





APOLLO'S 107 BIO-FILTER

Few diving displeasures equal the dreaded hack that comes with dry mouth. Suck on a regulator for more than 20 minutes, and chances are you will appreciate the possibilities of Apollo's new 107 bio-filter—promising clean, moisturized air for comfortable and safer diving.

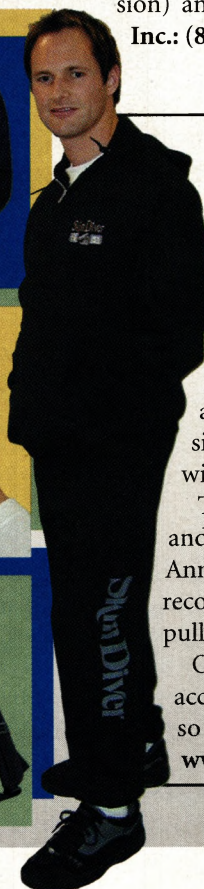
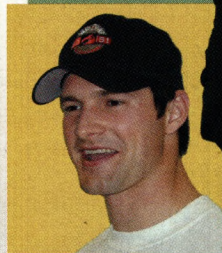
The bio-filter is usable with all scuba regulators, and attempts to eliminate the problems associated with dry tank air by replacing 30 to 70 percent of the humidity back into the air that a diver breathes and, in effect, restoring the tank air to a more natural atmosphere. It also utilizes a charcoal filter to remove trace particles of dust, rust and odor.

Other benefits may include easier pressure equalization, reduction of post dive headaches and general fatigue, and increase in bottom time. **Apollo Sports USA, Inc.:** (800) 231-0909, www.apollosportsusa.com

AQUATOY'S AQUADISC AND AQUASKIMMER

Frisbees have been ruling the air-currents since 1958. It's high time that someone took that same fun underwater, and that's the aim of two new throw-toys from Aquatoy.

The AquaDisc was inspired by playing with dolphins, and when thrown properly, can slice through up to 30 feet underwater. With the flick of the wrist, the AquaSkimmer can also zip across the water's surface, putting even the best skipping stone to shame. These rubber disks come in a variety of colors (including a glow-in-the-dark version) and assembled packs are available. **Aquatoy, Inc.:** (888) 571-1609, www.aquatoy.com



SKIN DIVER GEAR

THE BACKPACK: If your backpack is best suited for lugging chemistry texts between classes, maybe its time to upgrade to a true traveling companion. The *Skin Diver* backpack features padded and contoured shoulder straps for the long walks through airport terminals and rain forest hikes, while chest and waist straps help secure awkward loads. The pack's main compartment is separated into three areas—one large, one small and one smaller—for organizing clothes, sunglasses, passports and car keys. Two generous side pockets are perfect for carrying a water bottle, mask and snorkel, camera or similar sized gear. And, of course, the rugged exterior is appointed with *Skin Diver's* 50th Anniversary logo.

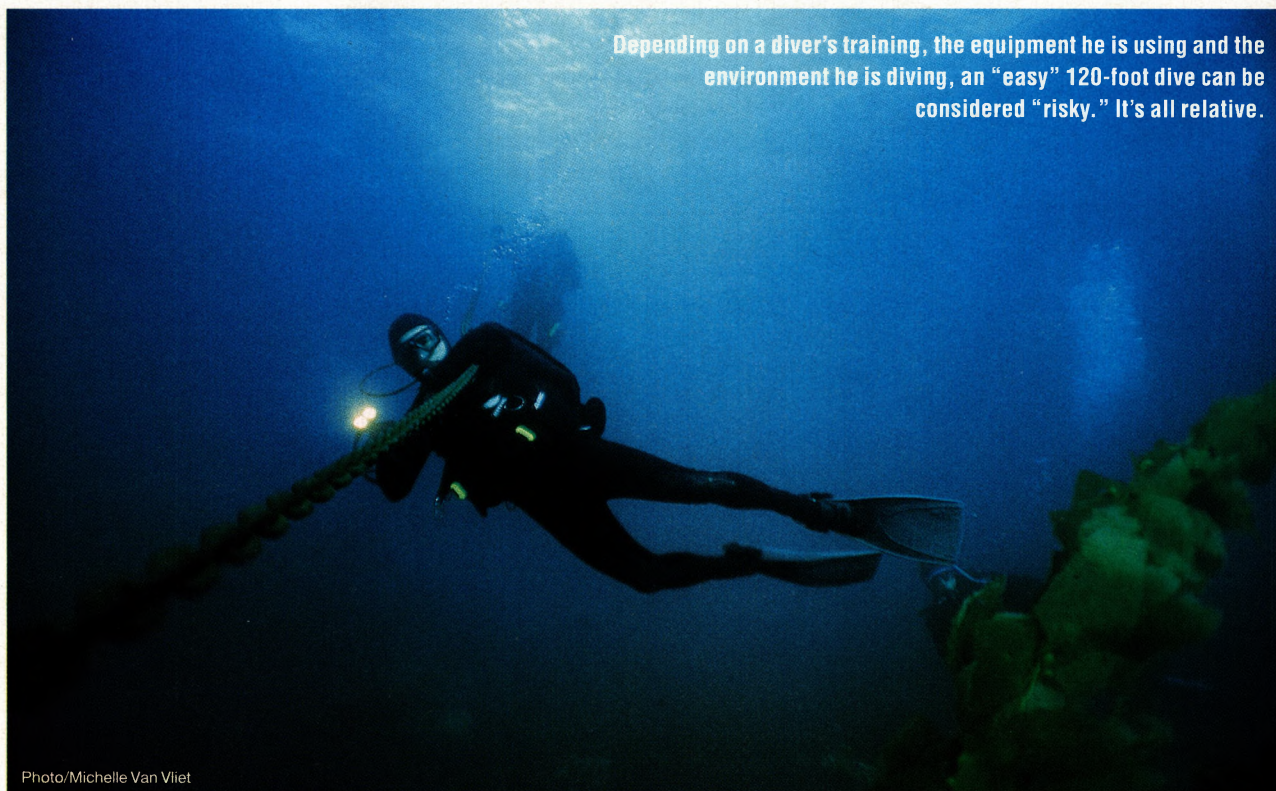
THE APPAREL: *Skin Diver* T-shirts are made from 100 percent cotton and are available with a team insignia (pictured right) or with the 50th Anniversary logo (pictured left). For staving off post dive chills, we recommend the 100 percent cotton, hooded sweatshirt (choice of pullover or zip-up) and matching sweat pants.

Of course, if you wear all of this gear at once you could be accused of working for the magazine. But, that wouldn't be so bad, would it? **Skin Diver Gear:** (877) 718-3429, www.skindivergear.com



A Matter of Relativity

BY KARL SHREEVES



Photo/Michelle Van Vliet

Depending on a diver's training, the equipment he is using and the environment he is diving, an "easy" 120-foot dive can be considered "risky." It's all relative.

THERE'S A SENSE OF "WHEW, NOW I CAN relax a bit," when you reach your first deco stop. Not to say you let your

Then a little voice in my head said, "Hey, dummy, you may be at the first stop, but you're still 220 feet deep!"

guard down, but that you can take a moment to let the adrenaline subside, especially after a "big" dive. And that's exactly how I felt when I hit the first stop after plunging to the deep restric-

tion in the Pit of Cannonball Spring in exhilarating, once-in-a-decade, Florida Springs-clear visibility. A dive to just shy of 300 feet will get your blood flowing under any circumstances, and with the exceptional visibility, this dive was especially exciting.

Letting go of the tension a bit, I methodically checked my tables, depth, time and SPG. All OK, and my mind begins to wander. *Ah, what a great dive. Wow!*

The first stop is usually short, so I don't let my mind wander too far. I rechecked my SPG, startled to see that I'd burned through more than 200 psi—from a set of twin 120s—in just minutes. Then a little voice in my

head said, "Hey, dummy, you may be at the first stop, but you're still 220 feet deep!"

Later, when I truly had more time to let my mind wander (that is, at the 25-minute stop at 20 feet), I started thinking that not long ago, 220 feet was a deep dive for me, not a stop depth. But then, thinking further, I realized that actually, 220 feet still is a deep dive for me, or anyone else for that matter, and so is 130 feet.

In the dive community you hear the same things again and again about tek diving: Tek divers go deeper. Tek tanks are bigger and there are more of them. Tek dives are longer. Tek penetrations go farther. Tek risks are greater. And while these are true, they're only true because we compare tek diving to recreational diving.

The point is that what is "deep" or "long" or "risky" has as much to do with our reference frame as it does with what we're trying to pin the label onto. To many nondivers, 60 feet is deep, 30 minutes underwater is "long" and diving itself is "risky." Likewise, for the experienced technical, deep diver, a dive to 130 feet on twin 80s on a warm, clear tropical reef isn't particularly deep. But for the same diver, 130 feet in a cold, dark lake using only a single tank rig is definitely deep!

In planning technical dives, it's as important to account for this relativity as it is to account for your decompression schedule or the water temperature. How much risk a diver faces during a dive will relate substantially (though not entirely) to the diver's training and experience, the equipment available and the environment. A dive that's "too deep" today may not be tomorrow after the diver picks up the additional relevant training or experience.

State-of-the-art diving also introduces relativity: In 2001, decompression risk is higher for a trimix decompression dive to 290 feet than for an air

no-stop dive to 60. Physiologists understand decompression with air in the no-stop limits far better than they understand trimix decompression, which is still somewhat experimental. But in 2011, decompression science

How much risk a diver faces during a dive will relate substantially...to the diver's training and experience, the equipment available and the environment.

may understand trimix decompression as well as no-stop air diving.

Bottom line: When planning a tek dive, or any other dive for that matter, you can't assess your options without accounting for what you're comparing them to.

Not All Relative

But there's another side to the coin. My stop at 220 feet wasn't deep relative to my bottom depth; yet within the existing state of diving, 220 feet is still deep. My gas consumption is still 7.6 times higher than at the surface. I'm still a long way from the surface if I have a problem (especially in a cave). And I have a lot of decompression stops between me and *terra firma*.

No matter how deep or shallow, "safe" or "risky," long or short a dive is compared to another dive, the maximum depth, the gear you have, etc., once you're there—you're there and relativity becomes an abstract concept for Einstein to deal with. Don't get complacent about what you're doing or where you are, because you still have to do whatever it takes to come back safely. ➤

Karl Shreeves is VP, Technical Development for DSAT (Diving Science & Technology) and PADI.

AIR COMPRESSORS

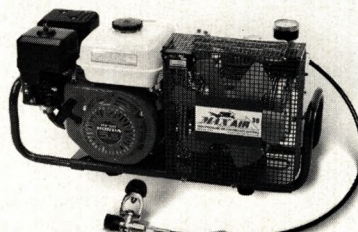
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BY MICHELLE DANNER

Welcome to the Diver's Library, where each month we bring you the latest in diving media.

Coral Sea Reef Guide, by Bob Halstead, Sea Challengers Natural History Books, Etc., \$44.95, (925) 327-7750, e-mail: dave@sea-challengers.com

A good guidebook is informative, clear and concise. A great guidebook is all of the above, plus it invites us to explore the world it describes. Bob Halstead's *Coral Sea Reef Guide* achieves the latter with full color photography and crisp text that brings to life the fish, coral, invertebrates and other organisms of the Indo-Pacific's reef environments.

The Coral Sea encompasses some of diving's richest and most ecologically

treasured waters. The marine life of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and the Great Barrier Reef are all covered. The *Coral Sea Reef Guide* is easy to navigate and provides essential scientific information as well as practical tidbits on spotting certain species.

Divers will find this guide an indispensable ally when confronted with the all-too-common question: What was that?

Hawaii's Spinner Dolphins, Above & Below Video Inc, \$20, (808) 325-7286, www.aboveandbelow.com

With just a snorkel, fins and mask, Bill Schupp captures on tape some of the ocean's most agile creatures off

the coast of Kona in his video *Hawaii's Spinner Dolphins*.

Without narrative, viewers are drawn in by the meditative rhythms of Soren Hlygaard's score. The video allows viewers to simply watch the dolphins. The viewers' focus is drawn to the dolphins' grace and power as they perform an endless water ballet.

The video is admirable and surprisingly enjoyable, but at times it would have been nice to also hear the dolphins, as Schupp must have.

For information on how to submit a product for review in Diver's Library, contact Michelle Danner at dannerm@emapusa.com.

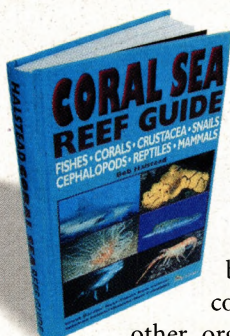


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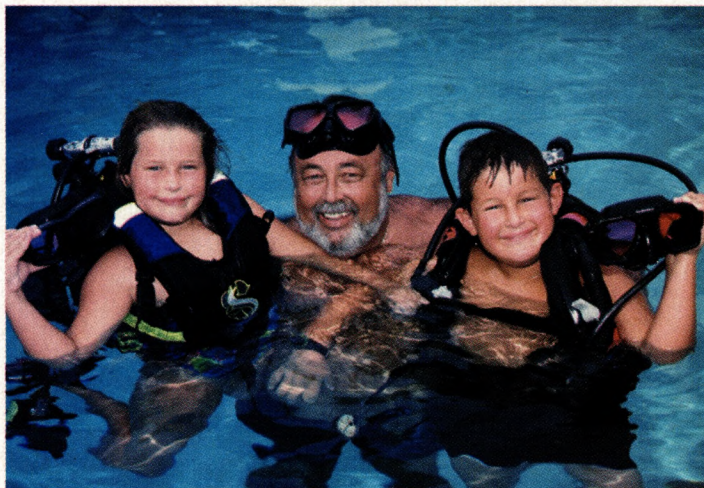
fiftieth

milestones by scott d. jones

Wayne Hasson—Aggressor Man, Family Man

ANY CONVERSATION ABOUT LIVE-aboard diving would be incomplete without mentioning Wayne Hasson. A 30-year veteran of the dive industry, Wayne and his wife Anne were working at Casa Bertmar on Grand Cayman when they envisioned

Aggressor Fleet. A man of many hats in his career, including U.S. Marine, dive instructor, businessman and photographer, Hasson was most recently a driving force behind the introduction of the SASY (Supplied Air Snorkeling for



Photo/Anne Hasson

the creation of a better dive vacation. This dream came true in 1984, with the launch of the *Cayman Aggressor*. One of the true visionaries in the world of diving adventure, Hasson's idea has expanded to 13 vessels worldwide, which make up the

Youth), which is attracting young people to the aquatic realm throughout the world. His most recent innovation is Kids' Sea Camps aboard the Aggressor boats, an idea that allows entire families to enjoy the live-aboard experience. 🐠

Bruce Bowker—Puttin' Bonaire on the Map

A TRUE DIVE PROFESSIONAL WHO CREATED THE POPULAR CARIB INN ON BONAIRE MORE than 20 years ago, Bruce Bowker has made the 10-room resort a "must-visit" destination for serious dive travelers. Starting in 1973 as the first full-time dive instructor on Bonaire, Bruce began his career as part of Capt'n Don's Adventures, now Capt'n Don's Habitat. He worked for Capt'n Don's for six years before opening his own resort. Today, the Carib Inn remains a small and intimate retreat, just how Bruce, and his wife Liz, have always wanted it to be. A strong proponent of protecting the aquatic environment, and Bonaire environmental issues in general, Bowker played a key role in the Bonaire government's reacquisition of Klein Bonaire in late 1999. 🐠

Stuart Cove—Shark Wrangler of Hollywood's Bahamas Backlot

BACK IN 1977, STUART COVE WAS HIRED as a stunt/safety diver for the James Bond film *For Your Eyes Only*. Cove's innate ability to "wrangle sharks" earned him the opportunity to act as the lead underwater coordinator for another Bond film, *Never Say Never Again*, in 1983.

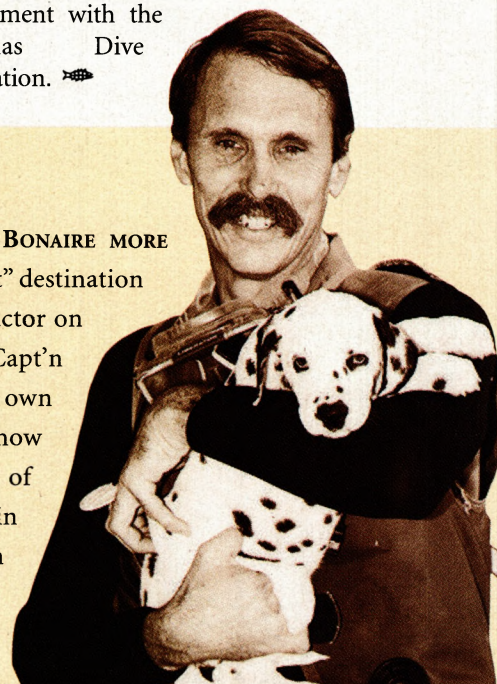


Photo/Pam Christman

Nine years later, Cove was sought out to assume dive operations in the Bahamas and formed Stuart Cove's Dive Bahamas. Dive Bahamas was one of the first to present mainstream shark feeding and today, with its world-class dive facilities, is considered one of the most successful and modern dive operations in the globe. His operation offers all the latest toys and has a fleet of top-notch dive boats with the capability of serving hundreds of divers each day.

And although Stuart (with his wife and business partner, Michelle) has continued to work on Hollywood films, such as *Splash*, *Cocoon* and *Flipper*, it is his Dive Bahamas that has generated his international reputation.

In addition to diving and films, Stuart and Michelle avidly work to protect the environment through their involvement with the Bahamas Dive Association. 🐠

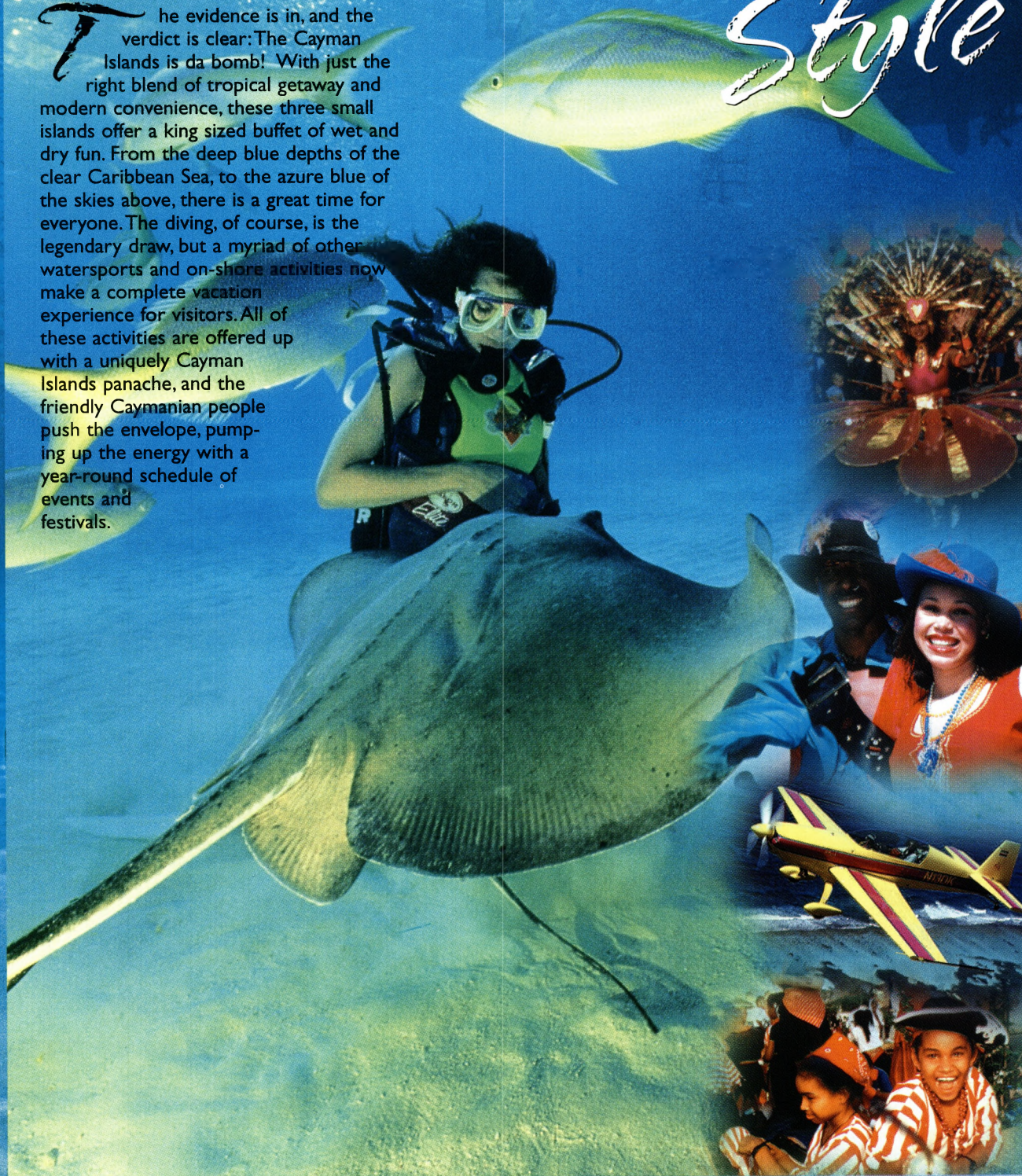


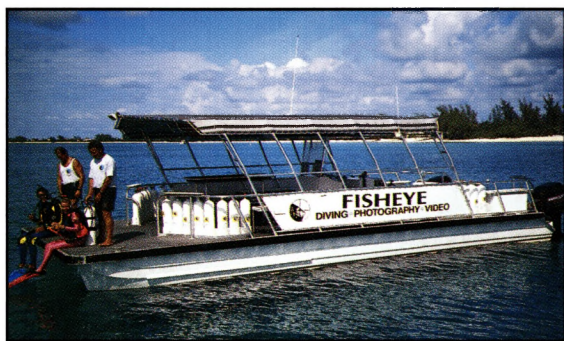
by Jim Walker

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Diving

For more than 50 years, the Cayman Islands has beckoned divers with its warm, clear waters, breathtaking undersea terrain and exotic marine life. Recognized early on as one of the world's top dive destinations, the Cayman Islands has preserved its marine (and terrestrial) resources through a system of park, replenishment and environmental zones, and numerous permanent moorings. Famous dive sites surround each island and new ones are being discovered all the time through a partnership between the destination's Department of Environment and the Watersports Committee members of the Cayman Tourism Alliance.

Grand Cayman's underwater offerings include every type of Caribbean experience imaginable, including wrecks, walls, shallow reefs and the hands-on fun of Stingray City, where divers and snorkellers cavort with gentle Southern Stingrays. Little Cayman is one of the world's premier wall diving meccas. At Jackson's Bay and Bloody Bay, the tops of the walls can reach as shallow as 20 feet. Loaded with sponges and marine growth, they fall steeply away into the deep blue. Cayman Brac has a varied and pristine dive terrain, but a lush fringing reef surrounds most of the island. One of the most famous Brac sites is the 330-foot Russian frigate, sunk to create a dive site and renamed the *M.V. Captain Keith Tibbetts*.

Attractions/Activities

Each of the islands also has its own brand of non-diving pleasures, too. The Sister Islands of Little Cayman and Cayman Brac lean toward a more serene experience. While both have all the modern conveniences and a small selection of hotels, condos, villas and dive operators to serve guests, the pace is relaxed and the attractions are nature's handiwork. Highlights on Little Cayman include the 203-acre Booby Pond Nature Reserve, which supports the largest nesting colony in the Western Hemisphere of rare, Red-footed Boobie birds; and the Salt Rock Nature Trail, offering an intimate look at the island's exotic plants and animals. The Brac's attractions include the 180-acre Brac Parrot Reserve, where Cayman Brac Parrots flourish; and the 140-foot high limestone bluffs at the eastern end, where amateur spelunkers can explore natural caves. Both Little Cayman and Cayman Brac offer big game fishing in the deeper waters, and world-class catch and release fly fishing for Bonefish and Tarpon in the shallows.

Grand Cayman topside offers the full spectrum of treats, from the natural solitude of the East End, to the fun-for-all frenzy of Seven Mile Beach. One must-see is the quirky little hamlet of Hell—so named because of the mind-blowing ironshore rock formations that abound in the area. Here you can get your mail postmarked from the "underworld."

Grand Cayman has a seemingly endless selection of hotels, condos, dining establishments and pubs. There are cultural attractions, such as Pedro St. James Historic Site, an authentic great house from the 19th century; the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park—one of the Caribbean's best; the Cayman Turtle Farm, where endangered marine turtles are raised to be released into the ocean; and the National Museum, where visitors can view an amazing 3-D geological model of the Cayman Islands. These four attractions have recently developed the Heritage

Passport, which gives the holder entry to each of the attractions at a fraction of the total cost. Adults pay \$19.95 and kids, \$10.95. What's more, the passport makes a delightful memento of your trip. These are available at the hotels' concierge desks or at any of the four attractions.

Watersports are king from George Town through Seven Mile Beach. There is sailing, windsurfing, WaveRunners, parasailing, kayaking and water-skiing. Semi-submersibles take visitors beneath the ocean's surface, and full-on submersibles explore the silent wonders as deep as 800 feet. As with the other islands, a variety of fishing experiences are abundant.

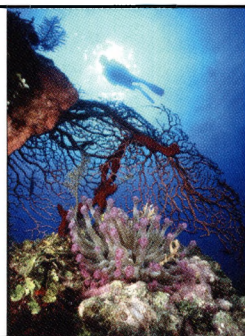
Events

With the perfect setting for enjoying oneself, the people of the Cayman Islands seem dedicated to maximizing all the pleasures at hand. They have organized nearly a hundred entertaining public events to focus on their history, culture, food, flora, fauna, air and water. Some of these activities last only a few hours, others for full weeks, and many of them are carried out simultaneously on all three islands, such as the holiday celebration of the birthday of the Queen of England. There are bike rides, swims, beauty pageants, festivals for food and art, flower shows, fishing tournaments, dog shows, auctions, clean-ups, sailing regattas, plays—and parties, parties, parties. We'll only highlight a few of these events here. For a full listing of this year's Cayman Islands events, visit www.divecayman.ky.

A few of the events that involve all three islands include the Naul Bodden Wahoo (fishing) Tournament, in



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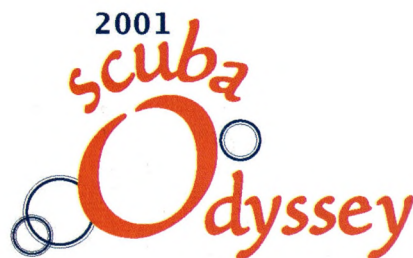
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March, with \$10,000 in cash prizes, and the Cayman Islands International Fishing Tournament (April-May), with hundreds of thousands of dollars in prizes. Cayfest (April) celebrates the arts and culture of the Cayman Islands, with music, drama, dance, art, talent and photo presentations. Batabano (April) is a costume carnival weekend. Chillin 'n Cayman (April) highlights a variety of the islands' businesses, with specially priced packages. Aviation Week (June 13-18), is all about private piloting, and includes aircraft displays, air shows and fly-ins.

This summer, the destination is offering a fantastic program for visitors, which includes attractive discounts from many of the properties, restaurants and, of course, water-sports operators. Getting there would be more economical, as well, as some of the major U.S. carriers—including the national carrier, Cayman Airways—have partnered with the local private sector to ensure that visitors receive a complete value-added package. The travel period for this program is May 1 through September 30. Call your nearest travel agent for more details.

Grand Cayman events include the Round the Island Regatta (April), with its much sought-after Big Boats trophy. An island-wide cleanup is part of the Earth Day (April) celebration. The Database Carnival, in George Town, features a selection of live Caribbean and popular music, a parade and costume contest, and lots of concession stands for tasty treats. In June the Flowers Annual One Mile Swim benefits the CI Amateur Swimming Association and there are lots of prizes and souvenirs. Taste of Cayman (July 2-14) is an all-you-can-eat food festival, including a golf competition and chili/conch cook-off.

Two of the largest Grand Cayman events are Cayman Madness (September) and Pirates Week (October 26-November 4). Madness is a series of week-long packages for divers, with barbecues, luaus, underwater treasure hunts and diving to the max. During Pirates Week, George Town is "attacked" from land and sea by costumed pirates and wenches, and there are 5K runs and swims, fireworks, street dances, food festivals, golf tournaments, mock pirate trials, sailboard races and a host of other diversions that truly make this event Cayman's national festival. Finally, finishing up the year, at Christmas time, the Parade of Lights brings colorful displays on land and sea.

Little Cayman enjoys a Mardi Gras celebration (February), with a parade, street dance and jambalaya dinner. There are prizes for the best costumes and floats. The Sister Islands Tourism Association (SITA) Cookoff occurs on Little Cayman in April, and features a variety of culinary experiences, plus a competition among the island's best chefs.

Both Little Cayman and Cayman Brac offer up SummerFest (July 4) and the SITA Photo Challenge (August 10-12). The former includes raft races, bike rallies, volleyball tournaments, prizes, dances and fire-



SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

works—and, in the latter, professional and amateur photographers compete for great prizes, trying to shoot the best of the Sister Islands above and underwater.

Cayman Brac's SITA Cookoff occurs in May, and its Brac Wreck Bash (throughout September) celebrates the anniversary of the sinking of the *M.V. Captain Keith Tibbetts*. There are dances, parties, contests and celebrity guests. Brachanal (April) is the Brac's costume carnival, similar to Batabano on Grand Cayman.

As you can see, if you do nothing but dive in the Cayman Islands, you'll have a fabulous time. However, you might consider making a longer visit here, to provide more topside time, and scheduling it to coincide with your favorite of the multiple good-time events. It will give you a chance to party with the people, as well as enjoy the splendor of their natural resources.

Get Re-Energized!

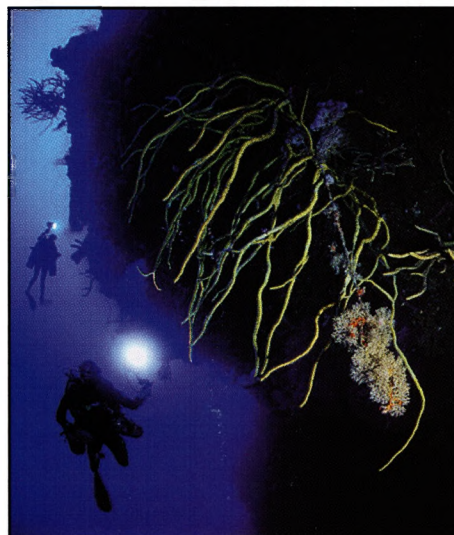
This Summer, "GET RE-ENERGIZED IN THE CAYMAN ISLANDS"! For the first time, suppliers from every sector of the local tourism industry have come together to offer a fantastic program for the visitors during the Summer months. At participating properties, for example, pay for 4 nights and get the 5th night free; kids under 12 stay FREE and also EAT FREE at participating restaurants offering a wide range of cuisine - a terrific attraction for a family on a modest budget. Watersports operators have offered 20% OFF services and selected merchandise; with Car Rental companies also offering a 20% OFF their regular rates. Participating airlines include national flag carrier, CAYMAN AIRWAYS, with non-stop service from Miami, Tampa, Orlando, and Houston; AMERICAN AIRLINES, with daily non-stop service from Miami; AIR JAMAICA, with daily service from its Montego Bay hub with connections from cities such as Atlanta, Boston, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix and others. Each of these carriers is offering 20% OFF the applicable airfare. All packages must be purchased through your Travel Agent and the booking period for this program is May 1 through August 31. Call your nearest Travel Agent or download the attractive brochure from www.divecayman.ky.



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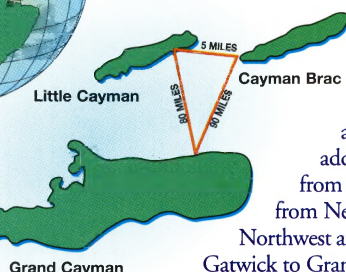
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SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

Getting There/General Info



It's hard to imagine a destination that offers dive travelers more than the Cayman Islands. Underwater there is incredible diversity: colorful walls, shallow coral reefs, new and old wrecks, and friendly, photogenic marine life. Divers enjoy all of this in visibility that averages 75 to 100 feet and water temperatures from 79° to 83°F.

Diving couldn't be easier anywhere. The topside dive services are state of the art and just as diverse as the underwater attractions. There is a dive operation to suit every need, every budget and every wish.

The three islands are very different. Little Cayman and Cayman Brac are sparsely populated and quiet. Grand Cayman offers a little of everything. The capital of George Town has every modern amenity but there are quiet, laidback areas as well.

While great dive destinations often require difficult travel, the Cayman Islands are easily reached—they're just a little more than an hour's jet flight from Miami! In addition to Miami, national flag carrier, Cayman Airways, provides non-stop service from Orlando, Tampa and Houston. There is also non-stop service to Grand Cayman from Newark on Continental Airlines, New York (JFK) and Atlanta on Delta, Detroit on Northwest and Philadelphia and Charlotte on US Air. British Airways offers direct service from Gatwick to Grand Cayman and inter-island travel is provided by Island Air.

www.divecayman.ky

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Beach Club Divers	(800) 482-3483
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Capitol's Surfside	(345) 949-7330
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Cayman Aggressor IV	(800) 348-2628
Cayman Diver	(345) 945-4593
Cayman Diving Lodge	(800) TLC-DIVE
Cayman Diving School	(345) 949-4729
Cayman Glide Divers	(345) 945-2711
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Clint Ebanks Scuba	(345) 949-3873
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Divers Down	(345) 945-1611
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Eden Rock Diving	(345) 949-7243
Fisheye of Cayman	(800) 887-8569
Neptune's Divers	(345) 945-3990
Ocean Frontiers	(800) 544-6576
Off The Wall Divers	(345) 945-7525
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Quabo Dives	(345) 945-4769
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Rivers Sport Divers	(345) 949-1181

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Seaview Dive Centre	(345) 945-0577
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Shelby's Charter Boat	(345) 948-0535

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JUNE HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED as International Scuba Month, and the HammerHeads are making the most of it by gearing up for their Third Annual Fun Zone Trip to the

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Cayman Islands. The sea-based celebration will take place July 21 to 28 and will draw divers from all over the world, setting the stage for some serious chaos in the Caribbean—amazing diving, premium parties, incredible

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For more information on booking a trip, contact Lydia Eldridge at (858) 616-6408 or e-mail lydiae@dema.org.

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SCUBAFINS IS A GROUP OF ACTIVE DIVERS of all levels interested in promoting the sport of diving. ScubaFins claims that Atlanta has the largest population of landlocked divers per capita in the country. This means more schools, more retailers and more divers. The club's main goals are to link divers with one another, give accurate information on equipment and deliver updated travel information—in essence, make diving safe and fun.

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For more information on ScubaFins, visit www.scubafins.com.

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Photo/Courtesy of HammerHeads



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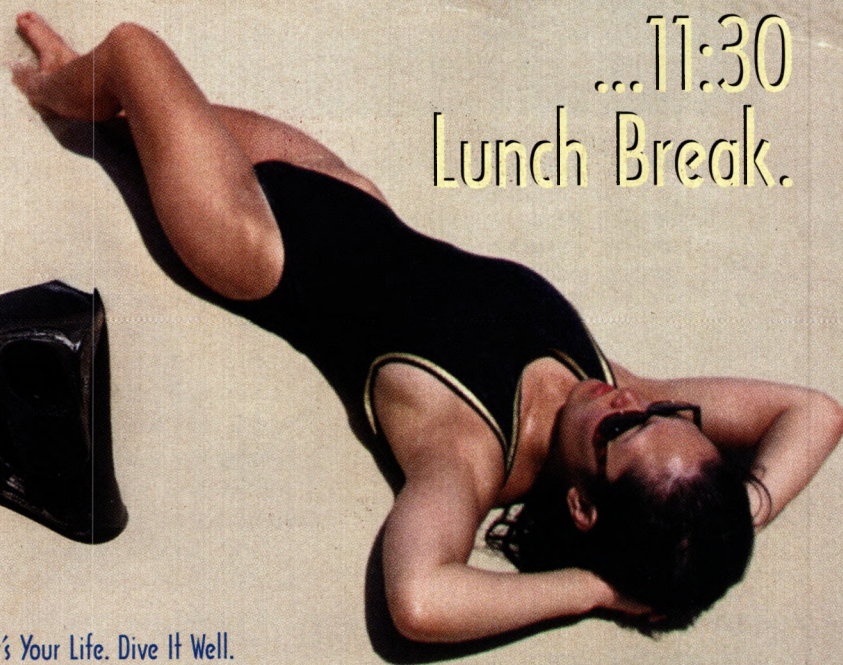
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Banggai Cardinalfish— *Pterapogon kauderni*

BY DENISE NIELSEN TACKETT AND LARRY TACKETT

I KNEW WHAT IT WAS AS SOON AS I SAW IT, and I still couldn't believe it. I needed confirmation. I surfaced and hollered to Jack Randall (one of the world's foremost fish experts) to dive in. I

Pajama or Coral Cardinalfish in shape, but their coloration is entirely different. In addition to being rare and exquisitely patterned, they are known for their unique breeding habits. When

other cardinalfish reproduce, females expel an egg ball that the male fertilizes and broods in his mouth until the eggs hatch and disperse in the current.

However, newly hatched Banggai Cardinalfish continue to take shelter in the male's mouth until they can fend for themselves. Males have been known to orally protect up to 42 juveniles and are the only known marine fish to do so. They cease to feed during this time, but have been known to occasionally eat their eggs and hatchlings. This and the lack of a pelagic stage help to explain this species' limited distribution.

But one question still remained: How did they end up in Lembeh Strait? I had dived this particular site many times and had not seen this species even though I had actively searched for it.

It seems that a local aquarium trader "lost" a shipment of Banggai Cardinalfish shortly before my discovery. Subsequent dives have found established

colonies of Banggai Cardinalfish at several sites in Lembeh Strait—a boon for divers and researchers alike. 🐟



Thanks to an aquarium trader who "lost" his shipment of Banggai Cardinalfish, these rare beauties, once exclusive to Banggai Island, are now forming colonies in Lembeh Strait.

showed him my find and he nodded in agreement and surprise, it really was a Banggai Cardinalfish! Aside from aquarium specimens, these fish had never been seen outside of the remote Indonesian islands for which they were named. So why was this little fish special and how did it come to be in Lembeh Strait, North Sulawesi, Indonesia, hundreds of miles to the north?

Banggai Cardinalfish resemble






WHERE TO FIND THEM

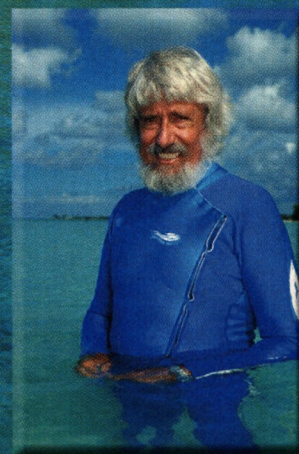
Indonesia: among coral heads and long-spined sea urchins in shallow water (less than 10 feet) outside Banggai Island and now in Lembeh Strait.

"There are fewer and fewer places left as beautiful as Fiji... Fiji's coral communities are among the most vital I have encountered anywhere."

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Audio/Video Gatling Guns

BY PHIL NUYTTEN, PH.D.



THE LAST NEWT FRONTIERS (JANUARY 2001) talked of a single image/audio acquisition system used to acquire data, store it and give it back at the high end of our acuity. Since then, I've had the opportunity to talk with one of the industry's top guns, Al Giddings.

An internationally renowned underwater director, producer and cinematographer—a guy with more Emmys and gold medals than Gates has zeros—Giddings is a bonafide audio/video expert.

His films include *The Deep*, *Never Cry Wolf*, *The Abyss*, *For Your Eyes Only*, *Titanic*, dozens of major, award-winning television films, television specials and a No. 1 slot, prime-time series.

I asked Al to tell me a bit about digital, high-definition video, and where it's headed in the future. His reaction was one of pure excitement.

"I wish I was 30 years old again," he said. "Everything we always wanted is here, kickin' at the door! Not long ago, I was invited to attend a demo by Paradise Productions at Universal Studios. They were showing 70 mm film in 3-D. Great subjects for showcasing the format included a major league football game—full zoom, the sweat, the grunting, dirt flying—you could almost count the linebackers' nose hairs. The images and the colors were as crisp as only film can be...except that it didn't originate as film. It was high-definition digital video bumped

to 70 mm. (long pause) I was speechless with the possibilities.

"Think about this," Al jabbed his forefinger into his palm, "A standard high-end, three chip camera has about 400,000 pixels per chip—that's 1.2 million pixels contributing to the image. But in high-definition, you have two million pixels per chip—six times the information—and they're already talking about a 10 million-pixel chip.

"Now, forget video...think 'stills.' The

per minute, and each individual shot—each frame—is of a photo quality that could make the cover of *National Geographic*."

But what about the cost of film?

"Cost?" (finger-jab) "Cost? Let me give you a quick lesson in Hollywood economics: Shooting in 70mm film, including stock, processing and work prints, runs about \$39,000 for 40 minutes. So, say, \$1,000 a minute, but 40 minutes of high-definition video tape costs only \$180."

Al was jabbing furiously, "Think about it—hi-definition

costs peanuts to shoot; resolution and quality of color are superb; and you can bang this stuff to 70 mm or 35 mm film, to high-quality still prints, to S-HVS, to standard VHS, and everything in between—this is the way to go! This is IT!" I almost expected him to end with a standing back-flip.

So, you might be asking what a high-definition, digital movie camera costs—say, one like the Sony F900 that Al was so taken with.

For this, I go to Val Ranetkins, head designer for the Canadian-based

The Amphibicam.



Photo/Val Ranetkin

From left: Dr. Sylvia Earle, Al Giddings and Dr. Phil Nuytten on location in Hawaii during the filming of *Mysteries of the Sea*.



Photo/Sea Films, Inc.

new digital, high-definition video cameras like the Sony F900 have a shutter knob. Normally, each frame is exposed for 1/60th of a second, but you can change to 1/125th or 1/250th, whatever you want, and each individual frame can be used to produce a high-quality still picture. It's a Gatling-gun still camera." Al was enjoying himself, almost shouting through a big grin. "So you're banging off 30 shots per second, 18,000 shots

Amphibico line of U/W video housings. Val is one of the top housing designers in the biz, worldwide, and certainly one of the fastest. By the time a major camera manufacturer starts shipping a new camera model, chances are that Val has already obtained an early prototype and tooled up to build an elegant pressure-house for it. Clever people, those Canucks.

"Sony F900?" Val asked. "Hmmm, figure a street price around \$90,000,

then add \$15,000 to \$20,000 for the lens system. I say roughly \$110,000—give or take.”

I gulped a couple of times, “And the underwater housing?”

“Well, the one we currently make, the HD Amphibicam, sells for just under \$70,000. Expensive, but it provides access to all functions underwater, and has special optics to deliver superb in-water images. But I’m just now finishing up a new model, with fewer bells and whistles, that should sell for somewhere around \$40,000—give or take.”

That’s a lot more give or take than home video! (But check it out at www.amphibico.com.)

I know I’m wasting your time with a space shuttle if all you can afford is a two seat Cessna. But that’s because this stuff is coming so fast that prototype prosumer versions of high-definition

**“I was
speechless
with the
possibilities”**

digital camcorders are on the radar of all the major players right now. Sony may have started the race with its “early bird gets the worm” attitude, but you can be sure that Panasonic, Canon and others aren’t far behind.

The commercial success of the precursor to the F900 started a population explosion of similar digitals. (Check out the Panasonic AJ HDC20A at www.panasonic.com. This is the unit used by Bob Ballard’s shooters to produce a special on the Black Sea and the search for scientific evidence of Noah’s biblical flood, which aired on PBS last May.) Trust me—you will be able to get your mitts on a prosumer high-definition digital system in the waitable future, and it will be lighter, cheaper and better than anything you’ve ever seen. Remember the words of the Prophet Giddings, “This is IT!” 🐟

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Kid's corner

By William W. Hartley

Passing on Our Stewardship Role

WHEN FIRST INTRODUCING OUR CHILDREN to open water snorkeling and scuba diving, we usually do it in conjunction with a vacation to warmer waters under an equatorial sun. Given the opportunity, we want to educate youngsters about this intricate ecosystem and teach them how to appreciate it.

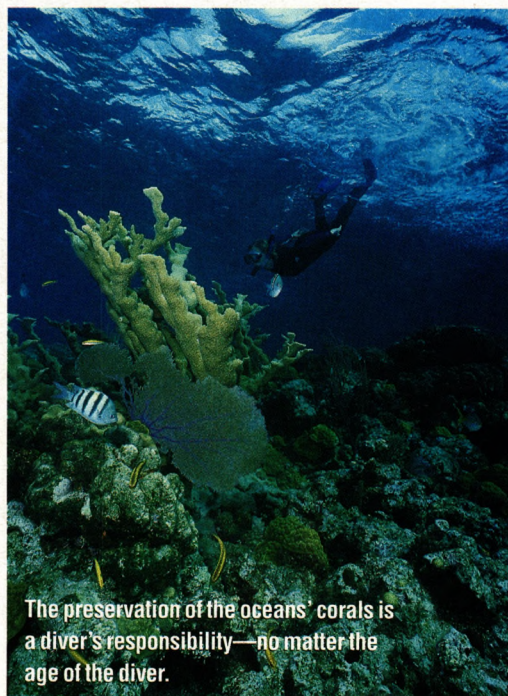
We have the privilege to introduce children to the most formidable and perhaps most fragile of all the oceans' living creatures—tiny coral polyps. Introduction to these majestic beauties and all of the reefs' inhabitants means introducing them to the diver's responsibility of stewardship of the oceans.

Knowledge and education is the first step in preserving and bringing about stewardship. We need to let our children know that reefs, although large, are fragile ecosystems that flourish everywhere. There are some 67 different species of coral found in the Caribbean Sea. About 450 different species of coral are found in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and cold-water corals can be found in unlikely places such as off the coast of New Jersey. Discuss the differences between hard and soft corals with children, why some corals look like leather while others look like brains, and why corals differ not only in size and shape but also in color.

As parents and as stewards of the oceans we need to create a simple means of teaching children about all living creatures. They need to understand that every living creature, even the smallest, ugliest and most misunderstood creature, needs to exist. But coral is a special species that we do understand for the most part. For

millions of generations it has served as an underwater home and habitat, a source of food and shelter for a growing community of marine species. Coral is to the clean blue seas, as the plants, bushes and trees are to land.

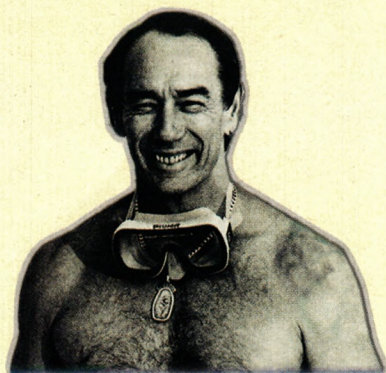
It is the basis of the food chain for many marine creatures, as plants are for land animals. Coral offers much more than terrestrial plants, however.



The preservation of the oceans' corals is a diver's responsibility—no matter the age of the diver.

To a large extent, its structures have surpassed and overshadowed the great achievements of all other living creatures, plants, animals or man. The tiny polyps that make up reef systems throughout the world have created towering columns from sea floor to its surface, broad islands that are now homes to land dwellers.

We, and our children, as individuals, are very much like the tiny coral polyps—almost insignificant as a single entity. But as a collective entity, we can do great things, and that includes ensuring the health and well-being of our oceans. 🐟



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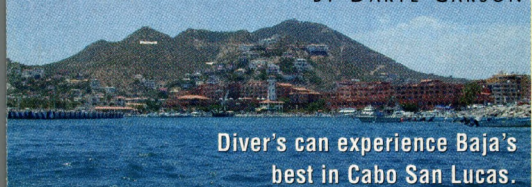
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3rd Annual Cabo Dive Fiesta: August 17-25

BY DARYL CARSON



Diver's can experience Baja's best in Cabo San Lucas.

Photo/Ty Sawyer

LIKE A FINE MARGARITA, A GOOD DIVE fiesta requires just the right mix of ingredients. First, you need great diving. No problem there. Diving off of Cabo San Lucas means hanging out at an oceanic crossroads. It's where the

Sea of Cortez meets the Pacific Ocean, and the pelagic traffic alone keeps divers coming back every year. Get in the water and you can see everything from Whale Sharks and Manta Rays to Garden Eels and angelfish.

Second, you need great atmosphere. Cabo has that covered, too. The beaches are wide, the sand is white and an ice-cold Pacifico always close at hand. You can lounge in the sun and get a henna tattoo, then cool off with a dip in the ocean; or haggle for hand-crafted souvenirs. Cabo restaurants serve Baja's best dishes, and the feverish beats at Squid Roe and the Gigglin' Marlin keep dancers out all night.

Third, you need sponsors (to bring the toys). Signed on for this year's event are Sea & Sea Underwater Photography (free camera demos and a photo contest), Body Glove (wetsuit and apparel giveaways) and Sport Chalet (regs, lights and other essential accessories). In keeping with Fiesta tradition, divers will have opportunities to win all of the

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On the hunt for diving's treasures.



Photo/Robin Jacoway

above during prize drawings and the underwater treasure hunt that's open to divers and snorkelers. Free return trips to Cabo will be up for grabs, too.

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The Third Annual Los Cabos Summer Dive Fiesta will be held August 17-25. For more information, call (877) 479-3483 or visit www.skin-diver.com.

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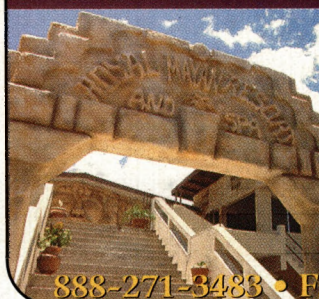


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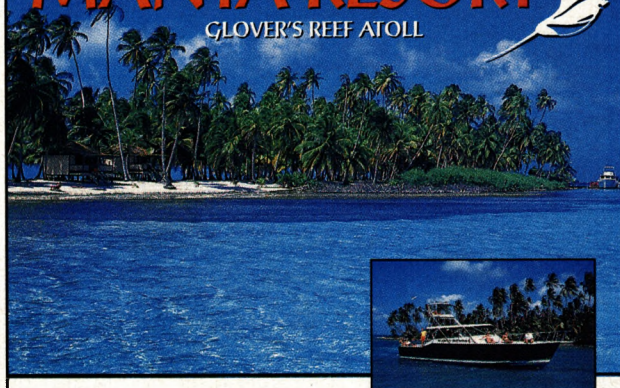


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YOUR FIRST UN

BY JACK AND SUE DRAFAHL

Now that you have your certification card and a few dives under your belt, why not give underwater photography a try? But where do you start? What equipment should you buy? What is the best film? How much is it all going to cost? There are so many variables, that it may seem a bit overwhelming, but not to worry. Underwater photography has evolved to a level that makes it easy to get good underwater pictures.

Before deciding which camera to buy, you first need to analyze what type of underwater pictures you desire—fish portraits, pretty coral, Mr. Big, prize winners or shots for the scrapbook. You'll need to have a plan, because this is all critical when selecting your underwater camera equipment and film.

■ BASIC UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY

For this discussion we'll break photography into four broad categories: general, macro, wide-angle and fish photography. Each requires a different configuration of camera, flash and lens. You'll sometimes need to plan your dives to match your intended type of photography, but some of the newer equipment makes changing your game plan underwater easier. And most of all, you'll want your camera to be compact, easy to use, require low maintenance, and be capable of reliable results at a price that won't break the bank.

■ GENERAL UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY

Most entry level underwater cameras are designed to shoot general photography. It is the most compact type of shooting because it doesn't require much more equipment than the camera itself. Many point-and-shoot cameras have the focus fixed at a specific distance from the camera and subjects are sharpest at that focus point. Subject matter covered in general photography is underwater scenics, divers or both.

Since compactness is key to entry level cameras, most have an internal flash built into the top half of the camera. The maximum distance for most of these built-in flash systems is less than seven feet, but many manufacturers offer a more powerful flash as an accessory. With general photography it's usually a good idea to use the flash to bring out the details and colors of your subject.

All of the cameras listed here will nicely fill your general photography needs.

■ MACRO PHOTOGRAPHY

The easiest and most colorful type of photography is macro (close-up) photography. There are several ways to capture small creatures on film, and the best method depends on the camera system you decide to buy. Most normal camera lenses have close focus limits that won't allow close-up focusing, so a special accessory must be attached, allowing you to photograph subjects closer to the lens.

Many point-and-shoot cameras have a close-up lens and framer system. When you want to take a close-up shot, you merely attach the close-up system to your camera, place the framer around the subject and shoot. It's also important to note that a flash is required to bring out the sharp, bright colors often associated with macro subjects.



Some amphibious cameras have extension tubes and framers that must be changed topside before going underwater such as the Nikonos V. Sea & Sea offers camera systems that allow you to attach a macro framer while underwater. This is great if you are photographing a tiny hermit crab and a Manta Ray swims by. Simply remove the framer and you are ready to capture that Manta on film, if luck is in your favor. But for pure close-up shots, nearly all the cameras listed here can be configured for macro photography.

■ WIDE-ANGLE PHOTOGRAPHY

One of the most exciting aspects of underwater photography is capturing the panorama of a reef and its creatures, and wide-angle photography makes it possible. First and



Underwater Camera



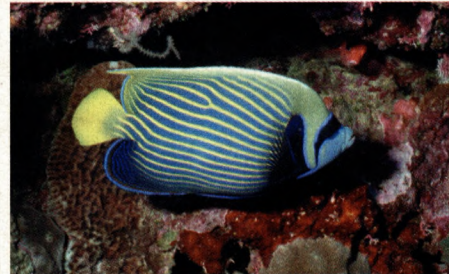
foremost, a wide angle lens is necessary for wide angle shots. More powerful strobes also help because the field of view captured on film is so much greater and thus more needs to be lit. Among this group of cameras the Nikonos V with a 15 or 20 mm lens, the Sea & Sea Motor Marine II-EX (16 or 20 mm lens) or MX-10 (20 mm) and the RTS EWA-Marine are probably your best bets. Some simple wide-angle shots are possible with the

other entry level cameras, but the majority of the dynamic wide-angle photos are taken on the cameras with wide-angle specific lenses.

■ FISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Everyone loves to look at fish photos, but in reality, fish photography is one of the most difficult to accomplish. Fish rarely sit still or let you get close, so a special approach is needed to capture them on film. To take fish pictures you'll need stealth, knowledge of the fish's habits and patience. Once you get the fish's cooperation, there are a couple of ingenious systems for entry level cameras that use gun sight

viewers (Bonica King II Snapper, Ikelight's Aqua-Shot & Auto 35, Pioneer Sealife reefmaster RC, Sea & Sea's MX-10 or MX-5) or light beams to tell you when the fish is in the frame and in focus. It is sort of a hit and miss operation, but as they say, practice makes perfect.



■ FILM

A great film for beginners is color negative film, which features a large selection of film speeds, and its wide exposure latitude makes obtaining good images easier. (Exposure latitude refers to how much leeway a film has in its ability to give a correct exposure despite varying levels of light. A wide exposure latitude allows you to get a good picture even if your exposure wasn't just right)

Once you start taking underwater pictures, every dive will become a scavenger hunt for the next great photo. And, a picture hanging on your wall will serve as constant reminder that you need to get back in the water soon. Don't get discouraged along the way, because it takes time to hone your skills. Enjoy the learning process.

Here's a list of some of the U/W cameras available so that you can review their features, restrictions and options. »

cameras and specifications (alphabetical by manufacturer)



Mini Sport

Camera type: Precision cast, non-corrosive aluminum alloy housing for the Vivitar BV-40 35 mm camera

Lens: 28 mm, f/8

Focus: Focus-free from three feet to infinity

Shutter speed: 1/100

Built-in flash: Yes

Viewfinder: Built-in

Film speed: ISO 100 to 400 auto Dx coding

Film Advance: Motorized advance and rewind

Depth rating: 330 feet

Suggested retail price: Housing and camera, \$279.95

Accessories: Close-up kit, strobe light, handle and tray

Complete system: \$ 489.95

Aqua Vision Systems, Inc.: (514) 737-9481, www.aquatika.ca



YOUR FIRST UNDER

2 bonica

Sea King II Snapper

Camera type: 35 mm inner camera with polycarbonate housing
 Len: 30 mm, f/5.6
 Focus: Focus-free from three feet to infinity
 Shutter speed: 1/125 second
 Built-in flash: Yes
 Viewfinder: Built-in, oversized
 Film speed: ISO 100 to 400 auto DX coding
 Film Advance: Automatic motorized advance and rewind
 Depth rating: 150 feet
 Suggested retail price: \$149.00
 Accessories: Close-up kit, neon strobe light, carrying case
 Complete system: \$499.00
Bonica Precision Inc.: (800) 220-8463, www.bonicadive.com

3 epoque

ET-100 SE

Camera type: 35 mm amphibious, high-impact plastic housing
 Lens: 34 mm optical glass, f/16 to f/3.5
 Focus: Focus free 2.6 to 10 feet
 Shutter speed: 1/125 second
 Built-in flash: Yes
 Viewfinder: Built-in sportsfinder is an optional accessory
 Film speed: ISO 100 to 400 auto DX coding
 Film Advance: Motorized advance and rewind
 Depth rating: 150 feet
 Suggested retail price: \$275.00
 Accessories: Auto-power strobe kit, sportsfinder, close-up lens and color correction filters
Epoque America: (631) 361-8880, www.et101se.com or www.epoqueamerica.com

4 ikeLite

Aquashot 3

Housing type: Polycarbonate housing for 35 mm single-use disposable cameras
 Cameras accepted: Kodak, Fuji or Ikelite AquaSnap single-use 35mm flash cameras, or Kodak single-use Funsaver APS camera
 Focus: Focus-free three to six feet
 Built-in flash: Yes
 Sportsfinder: Included
 Film Advance: Manual advance
 Depth rating: 125 feet
 Suggested retail price: \$80 (includes one AquaSnap camera)
 Accessories: Macro kit, water correction lens, substrobe AQ/S, travel bag
 Complete system: \$260

5 ikeLite

Auto 35

Housing type: Polycarbonate housing for the Superview 35 mm camera
 Lens: Triple element 28 mm
 Focus: Focus-free two to eight feet
 Built-in flash: Yes
 Sportsfinder: Included
 Film Advance: Motorized advance and rewind
 Depth rating: 125 feet
 Suggested retail price: \$160
 Accessories: Macro kit, travel bag, substrobe A35
 Complete Auto 35 System: \$400
Auto 35 Underwater Photography book (suggested retail): \$10.00
Ikelite Underwater Systems: (317) 923-4523, www.ikelite.com



Water camera

6 **nikon** Nikonos-V

Camera type: 35 mm amphibious, die cast body with O-ring gaskets

Lens: 35 mm, f/2.8, 43 degrees

Focus: Focus-free two to six feet

Shutter speed: 1/125 second

Built-in flash: No

Viewfinder: Built-in

Film speed: ISO 100 to 400 auto DX coding

Film Advance: Manual advance and rewind

Depth rating: 160 feet

Suggested retail price: \$580

Accessories: Close-up lens, 15 mm lens, 20 mm lens, SB strobes, extension tubes and framers

Nikon USA: (800) 645-6687, www.nikonusa.com



Macro Set: \$129.95

External Flash: \$199.00

Pioneer Research: (800) 257-7742, www.sealife-cameras.com

7 **Pioneer** Sealife Reefmaster RC

Camera type: 35 mm inner camera with hard deep-dive shell

Lens: Triple element 35mm lens, f/3.5

Focus: Focus free four feet to infinity; focus two to four feet with optional 3X close-up lens

Shutter speed: 1/140 second

Built-in flash: Yes, color correcting

Sportsfinder: Included

Film speed: Accepts all print and slide film

Film Advance: Automatic advance and rewind

Depth rating: 164 feet

Suggested retail price: \$189.95

Accessories: 3X close-up lens, external flash, macro set, carrying case

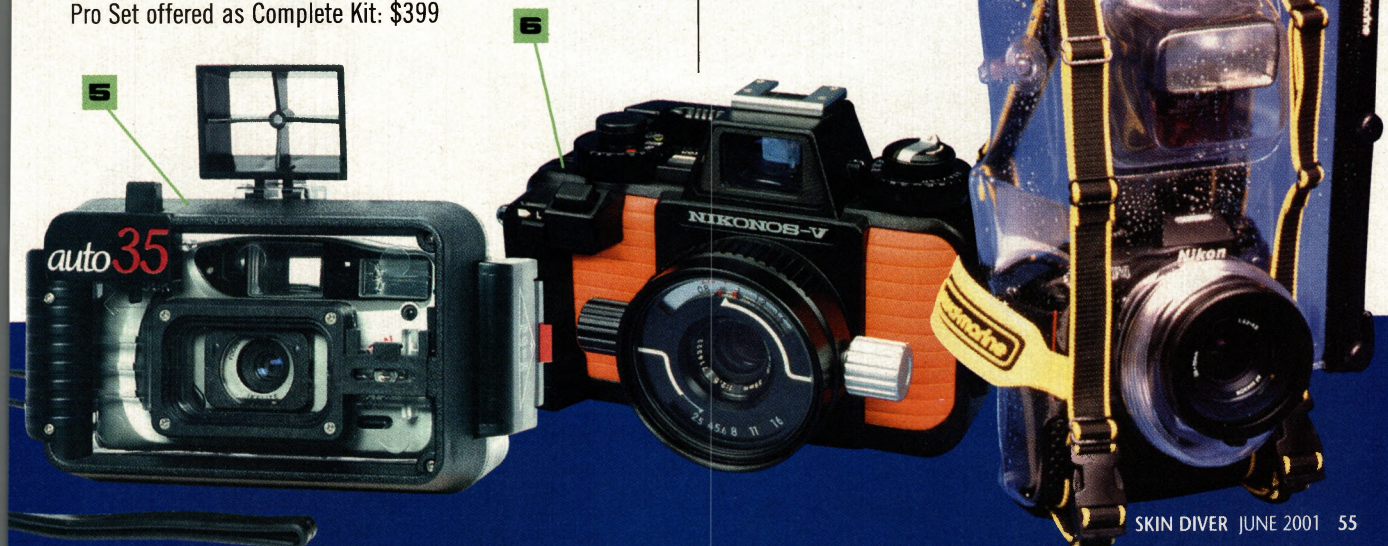
Pro Set offered as Complete Kit: \$399

8 **RTS** EWA-Marine

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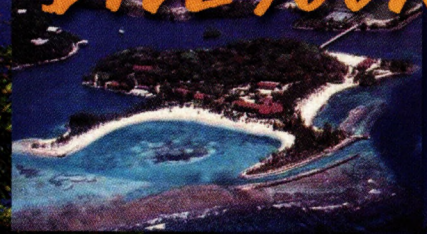
9 sea & sea

Motor Marine II-EX

Camera type: Amphibious 35mm camera with ABS molded, polycarbonate housing
Lens: Four element 35 mm lens, f/3.5

Aperture range: f/3.5 to f/22
Focus: 3.3 feet to infinity; 18 inches with close-up attachment
Shutter speed: Electronic—1/15, 1/30, 1/60 and 1/125 second
Built-in flash: Yes
Exposure Meter: Built-in
Viewfinder: Built-in with 85 percent frame coverage, 0.5 magnification
Film speed: ISO 50, 100 or 400 with automatic DX coding
Film Advance: Automatic load, advance and rewind
Depth rating: 150 feet
Suggested retail price: \$724.00
Accessories: Macro lenses, 20 mm lens, 16 mm lens, lens caddy, high eyepoint optical viewfinder, YS-30, 60, 90 or 120 Strobes

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10 sea & sea **MX-5**

Camera type: 35 mm amphibious camera
Lens: Triple element 28 mm lens, f/9
Focus: Focus-free from 2.3 to 5.6 feet
Shutter speed: 1/100 second
Built-in flash: Yes
Sportsfinder: Flip-up sportsfinder



camera

doubles as a lens protector

Film speed: ISO 100 or 400 auto DX coding

Film Advance: Automatic load, advance and rewind

Depth rating: 120 feet

Suggested retail price: \$189.95

11 sea & sea MX-10

Camera type: Amphibious 35 mm camera with ABS molded, polycarbonate housing

Lens: Four element 32 mm lens, f/4.5 to f/22

Focus: Focus-free from four feet to infinity

Shutter speed: 1/100 second

Built-in flash: Yes, with two aperture settings, f/4.5 or f/11

Viewfinder: Built-in

Film speed: ISO 100 or 400

Film Advance: Automatic load, advance and rewind

Depth rating: 150 feet

Suggested retail price: \$429.00

Accessories: Close-up lens, macro lens, 20 mm lens, lens caddy, YS-40A strobe

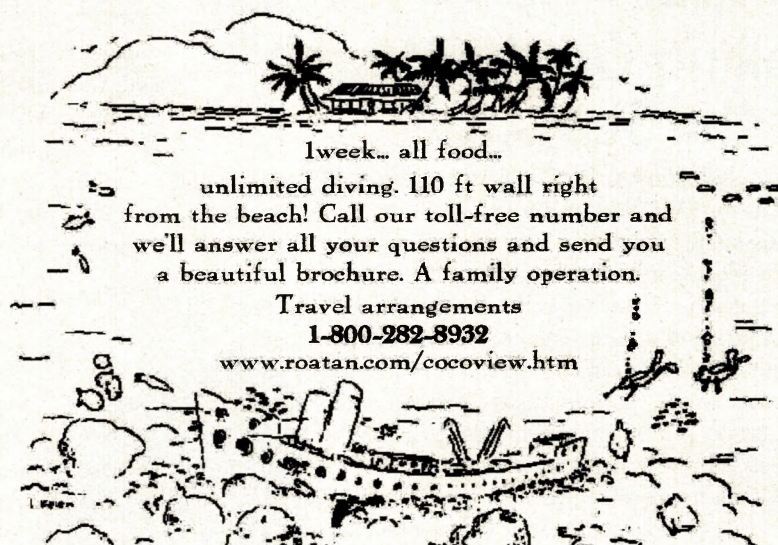
Complete kit includes camera and YS-40A strobe: \$699.95

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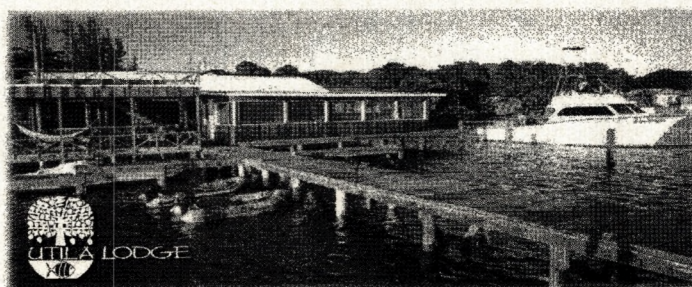
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Sailing On the Whims of the Sea

BY RYAN ALLEN

ONE SUN, ONE MOON, MYRIAD STARS AND A CREW OF 14 VOLUNTEERS navigate the RV *Heracitus* through Earth's oceans, on a daunting mission to map out the imperiled coral reefs. This 82-foot-long sailboat is styled in the fashion of a Chinese junk, and although the vessel has modern day GPS capabilities and a diesel engine, *Heracitus* is for the most part at the mercy of the currents and planetary winds. This makes its mission more difficult, yet is a poignant reminder that healing the reefs is more a matter of working with nature rather than trying to control it.

In 1991, the Planetary Coral Reef Foundation (PCRF) was launched, and in 1995, *Heracitus* was chartered as its research vessel in a five-year expedition to study the health of the world's coral reefs. All members of the international crew are volunteers (even the captain), who share the responsibilities of sailing the vessel around the world, along with observing and taking samples of the reefs. The research is under the direction of Dr. Phil Dustan, who has served as Science Advisor for The Cousteau Society and the first to use satellite imagery to map

coral reefs. The ultimate goal of the expedition is to help create a satellite surveillance system that will observe and monitor the reefs on a global scale, enabling scientists to timely determine what's happening and where.

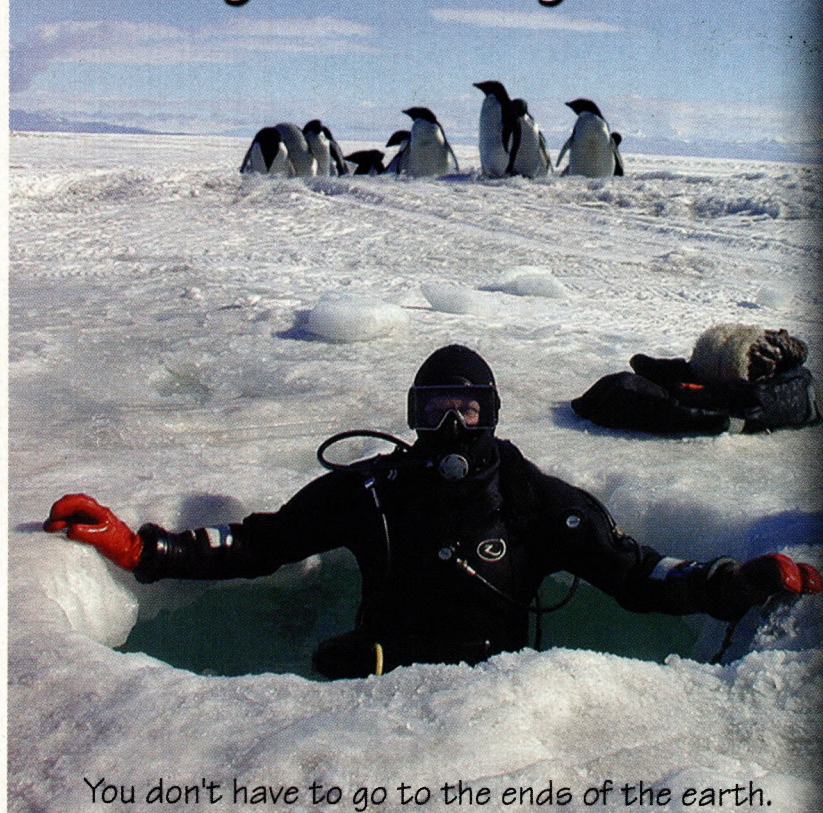
Another key force behind this effort is Abigail Alling, a veteran of the Biosphere 2 project, for which she served as Director of Marine Systems and Scientific Director during the two year experiment. While living within the biosphere's enclosed domes, she created and managed the largest man-made coral reef tank in the world (900,000 gallons). The corals' sensitivity to fluctuations in the environment served as a barometer of change—if the reef was doing well, the biosphere was doing well. Alling is the Co-founder, President and CEO of the PCRF, and previously used *Heracitus* to collect the corals that were transplanted into Biosphere 2's miniature ocean.

The initial five-year coral reef expedition has been extended to 10 years, and in March the RV *Heracitus* was visited by Jean-Michel Cousteau and James Cameron (Academy Award winning director of *Titanic* and *Terminator*), who are in discussions about doing a documentary on the sea, and expressed interest in *Heracitus* playing a role.

For more information about the PCRF, visit www.pcrf.org. 🐟



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Prime Diving in Puerto Rico

BY DARYL CARSON

I WAS HALF FLOATING, HALF SITTING IN THREE FEET OF WATER WITH a drink in my hand and the sun low on the horizon. For four days the nitrogen had been building in my blood, and now it was time to decompress. Just as I approached a state of near nirvana, a deluge of rain shocked me back to consciousness. I looked around at our small group, and without a word we all agreed that the

rain made everything perfect.

We were at Gilligan's Island on the south coast of Puerto Rico. To the east lies Guanica Bay, where American troops landed during the Spanish American War, to the north is the Guanica Biosphere Reserve (a rare example of sub-tropical dry forest) and to the south, a 15-mile-long wall dive. Each of these features is unexpectedly unique and travelers, including divers, are beginning to take notice of the area.

I was visiting Copamarina Beach Resort to examine their recent expansion (to 106 rooms) and to sample the area diving. The main underwater attraction is the wall. Less than five

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KEY LARGO, FLORIDA



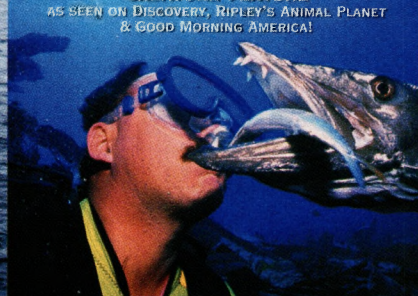
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miles offshore, it begins at 50 feet and with 50 to 70 feet of relief, is loaded with seafans, sponges and tropical fish. Closer to shore are stands of coral in 30-foot depths that feature big barrel sponges, moray eels, lobster, barracuda and the entire cast of Caribbean reef critters. Viz runs from 30 to 100 feet.

The diving, on its best days, is first-class Caribbean. However, afternoon winds are not uncommon and can make windsurfing a preferred activity over diving. Visitors can also mountain bike nearby trails, kayak through mangroves or hike the dry forest.

Dive Copamarina is the resort's full service dive shop and includes a Pro 42 dive boat. Resort features include a gym, spa, restaurants and several pools for lounging. Of course, Gilligan's Island is always close by for guests who prefer a saltwater pool surrounded by mangroves and sandy beach. And it's perfect for decompression picnics.

For more information on Copamarina Beach Resort, call (800) 468-4553 or visit www.copamarina.com.

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Photo: Remyanthony Barby

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The Old Na SHA A retired

If it hadn't been for my good friends in Key Largo, I'd be dead by now. It's a damn shame, too, because I'm a patriot to the core. I joined the Navy in 1956 and served the old Stars and Stripes for 33 good years. Got 16 metals in all, including the Humanitarian Service Metal back in 1978. I'm particularly proud of that one.

My friends have lots of off-color names for me, but you can just call me Grover. Like a lot of old salts, after I retired in 1989 I just sat around and got rusty. I spent so much time doing nothing I was ready for somebody to set me adrift and bury me at sea. Damn ready. Then, in 1996 some divers down in the Keys tracked my hard ass down and convinced me to move down there permanent like. So ol' Grover said, "Why not?" and I headed for the sun and fun. Hey, what's wrong with an old geezer going down one last time with a smile?

The wreck of ol' *Eagle*, off
Islamorada.



by Fred D. Garth
Photography by Tom & Therisa Stack

KEDOWN

vet's search for a sweet spot in the Keys

So I guess you're wondering why I'm boring you with my story. Well, I'll tell ya. Because I checked those Keys out from stem to stern. Gave 'em the old Navy shakedown. And I found out some stuff you ought to know. Like if you're a lobster eater, whoa baby, they got 'em by the hundreds. During the season you can dive down and snatch 'em up like fried chicken in a bucket! Or in Key West, Bill Clinton's famous don't ask don't tell policy goes right out of the old porthole. I didn't have to ask, and I could tell, right off.

Anyway, I've been all over this world from Zanzibar to Denmark to the islands of the Seychelles and was lucky enough to spend most of my career in the Caribbean. But somehow I ended my Navy stint landlocked in Virginia, so packing it in for the Florida Keys sounded like a sweet promotion. My plan was simple. Start at the top and work south. When I found the best spot I'd tie up and settle in.



A healthy, vibrant coral reef—the epitome of Keys diving.

The Old Navy Shakedown

When I first cruised into Biscayne National Park, I knew I was gonna like it. I could tell old Uncle Sam's hammer built that place. The finest facilities that tax money can buy. I found out that a lot of folks make the mistake of cruising right into Key Largo without stopping at Key Biscayne first, so the park is never crowded. And the diving is great, too. We spotted a nice-sized Jewfish hanging out. Those lips reminded me of old Ensign Harp-finkle. The girls always said he kissed like a fish.

Biscayne's a fine outpost, that's for sure. But it's a little far out for a retired vet like me to drop anchor.

So, I headed on down to Key Largo where I'd heard they got more dive shops than old Mr. Campbell has soup. They weren't lying. The red and white was flying from flagpoles, painted on buildings, stuck on bumpers and I even saw an old lady on a moped with a dive flag mohawk. Now, that's my kinda woman.

If you think that's somethin', there's even more good diving. Reefs like Carysfort, Elbow, Dry Rocks, Pickles and Molasses get a lot of action. A couple of my Coast Guard cutter buddies, Duane and his twin brother Bibb, are down there at about 130 feet. They're both wrecks, 327 feet from head to toe, and are home to all kinda critters—eels, 'cudas, turtles, rays, you name it. Those boys have been down since 1987. I hope I look that good in 14 years.

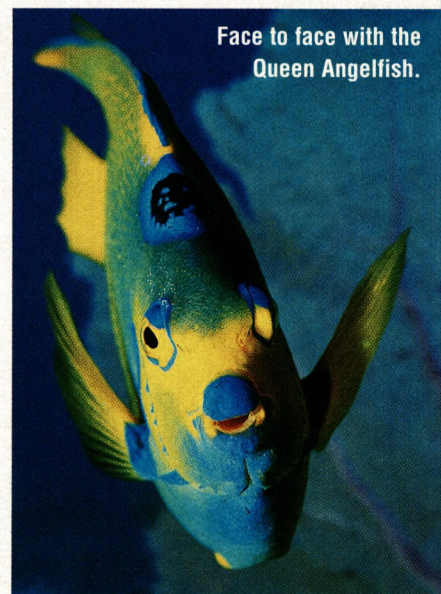
I'll be honest with ya. I 'bout fell in love with Key Largo. Almost tossed anchor right then and there. When I saw that Christ of the Abyss statue reaching up to Heaven I shed a lit-

**I'll be honest
with ya. I 'bout
fell in love with
Key Largo.**

tle tear, knowing I'll be goin' there soon myself. But don't tell those wussy Coast Guard cutters. They'd never let me live that down.

On south to Islamorada I found another good wreck, the *Eagle*. A few years ago a hurricane opened that old freighter up like a sardine can. I didn't worry about that though, 'cause I could always handle rough weather. She's 268-feet long, down at 110 feet and has as much crusty growth on her hull as hair on my old captain's back. I'll tell you, the sight of that old moss back with his shirt off made strong men cry for their mamas.

In addition to more dandy diving at places like Alligator Reef and Conch Wall, Islamorada claims to be the fishing capital of the world. Now that's pretty bold considering the world's a big ol' ball a water. I remember back in 1983 we loaded up on more fish than the crew could eat when I was stationed down in Honduras and Panama. So, I nosed around some boats and, by golly, they were catching tarpon, Bonefish,



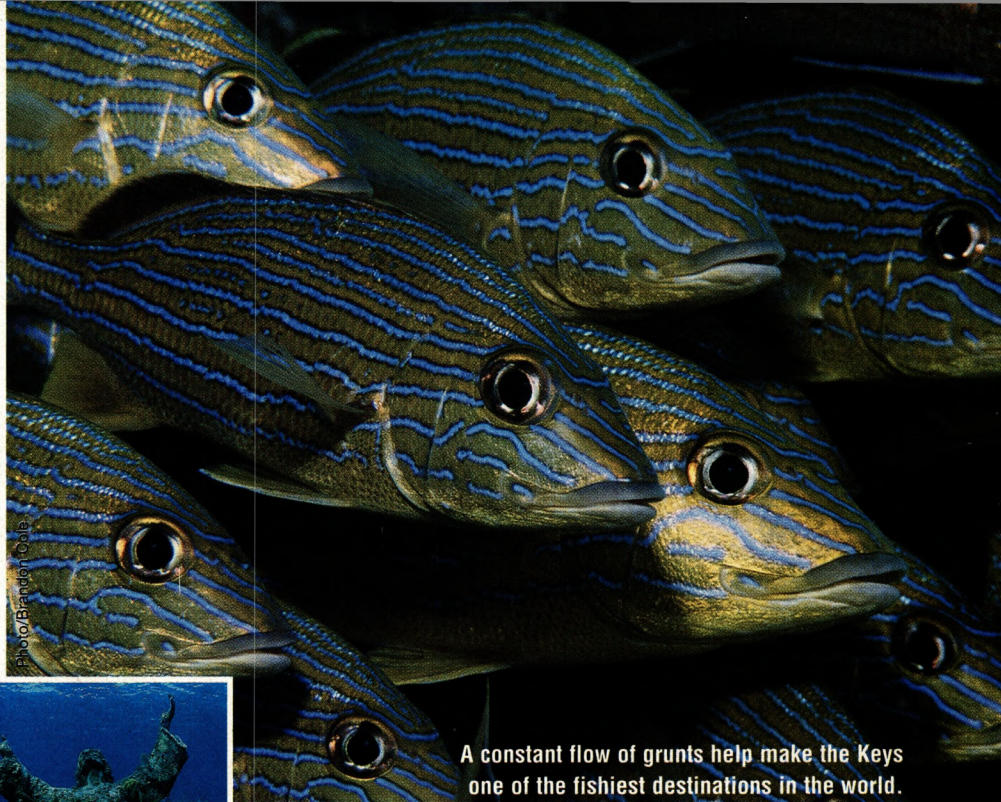
Face to face with the Queen Angelfish.

Permit, Sailfish, tuna—just about every fish a real fisherman loves to fight. I guess they got reason to boast.

I was liking these Keys better all the time, so I bolted for Marathon, a little more'n halfway down the line. What do you know? Another wreck. This one's the *Thunderbolt*, which I thought was some kinda James Bond movie. Turns out, she's a 188-foot research ship and cable layer down in 110 feet with lots of eye-popping sealife on her. Before the T-bolt was put down in 1986, the reefs like Sombrero and Coffin Patch were already dive havens. And, you know what? They still are.

What greased my gears about Marathon was the city life. They got two hospitals, one for people and one for turtles. That'll get an old gray fox like me excited. There's also the only airport between Key West and the mainland. I had to do some serious thinkin' about this place. Even grabbed a real estate magazine just in case.

Then there's that famous Seven-Mile Bridge with a view as gorgeous as my favorite Rita Hayworth swimsuit poster. I saw more than a few sailors go weak at the knees starin' at Rita. Turns out that bridge is the longest segmented bridge in the world, whatever that means. What it said to me was, "Come on down to Looe Key," one of



A constant flow of grunts help make the Keys one of the fishiest destinations in the world.



Christ of the Abyss.

the prettiest little spots I'd ever seen. Fact is, in 1981 some bureaucrats made Looe Key a National Marine Sanctuary. You can't take any fish, any kinda way down there, not even lobster. Seems the fish were pretty pleased about that, too.

When I think back, one thing that made my Navy buds happy was drinking enough Budweiser to sink a ship, literally. I know I shoulda bought stock in Anheuser-Busch, but instead I just stocked up the fridge. Adolphus Busch, Jr. can thank me later for spending enough money so he could buy a 210-foot ship and make a reef out of the old bird. They named her after his beer-brewin' daddy, Adolphus Busch, Sr., and put her down 100 feet in December of 1998.

RETIRED THE SPIEGEL GROVE

AT THIS VERY MOMENT HUNDREDS OF DECOMMISSIONED military ships rest at anchor with uncertain futures. Some are sold for scrap and some just rust into oblivion, while still others are resurrected as artificial reefs. As anyone who gets involved in the artificial reef game finds out, the process of going from mothballed ship to reef is tedious and expensive. Ships must be cleaned to EPA standards regarding materials such as asbestos, PCBs and lubricants. Rivers of bureaucratic red tape have to be crossed and lots of money has to be raised.

It took two years just for the EPA to determine the best way to clean the *Spiegel Grove*. Then in 1998, the ship was legally sold to the Key Largo Chamber of Commerce. Just the transportation cost to move the ship to Brownsville, Texas, for cleaning was almost \$100,000.

Through the efforts of many in Key Largo, and primarily Doc Schweinler and Joe Clark at Ocean Divers and Spencer Slate at Atlantis Dive Center, the *Grove* is scheduled to be put down this June—a process that began back in 1996. If all goes as planned, the ship will settle quietly near Dixie Shoals in 110 feet with the superstructure reaching up to 40 feet.

Currently another contingent out of Key West is trying to raise three million dollars to place a ship-reef offshore of their island. 🐠



Special thanks to Kevin Flatley who served on the *Spiegel Grove* from 1980-1983 and has built a comprehensive website about the ship. For all the information you'll ever want to know about the *Spiegel Grove*, visit www.geocities.com/~kflatley/lsd-32.htm.

The Keys from Stem to Stern by Bill Harrigan

Biscayne National Park

Virginia Reef: Shallow coral reef with branching corals on top, boulder and soft corals along sides.

The Wall: Near vertical wall starting at 65 feet, dropping to 105 feet, with large Convoluted Barrel Sponges.

Key Largo

Carysfort Reef: Historic reef light, shallow Elkhorn Corals, unique double spur and groove formation.

South Carysfort Reef: Extensive shallow reef top with live and fossil branching corals, large mounds of star and brain coral on reef front.

Elbow Reef: Clear water, *City of Washington* and Civil War wrecks, nice balance of hard and soft corals.

North North Dry Rocks: Shallow reef with tall coral ridges and lots of angelfish.

Key Largo Dry Rocks: Home of the Christ of the Abyss statue, very shallow branching corals on top, mounds of hard corals around periphery.

Grecian: Very shallow, good snorkel site, especially when winds are up from the north or east.

Benwood: Freighter sunk in 1942 after collision with *Robert. C. Tuttle*, 30- to 45-foot deep, lots of fish, great night dive.

French Reef: Calcium carbonate deposits from coral polyps form arches and shallow caverns.

Sand Island: Uncrowded, gently sloping reef with good vertical profile and corals.

Molasses Reef: Large outer bank reef with a variety of very fishy dive sites; depths range from 12 to 80 feet, with most diving in the 20- to 35-foot range.

Bibb: 327-foot Coast Guard cutter resting on starboard side in 130 feet; strong currents likely.

Duane: 327-foot Coast Guard cutter sitting upright in 120 feet; Strong currents likely.

Pickles Reef: Outer bank reef with moderate coral ridges, lots of fish.

Islamorada

Eagle: 269-foot freighter resting on starboard side in 110 feet, sunk in 1985.

Conch Reef: Many soft corals and sponges, gentle slope from 40 to 60 feet, wall from 60 to 90 feet.

Alligator: Ballast pile from USS *Alligator* in 10 feet near light house, main reef 20 to 50 feet.

Marathon

Thunderbolt: 188-foot cable layer/research vessel upright in 110 feet; possible strong currents, many fish.

Sombrero: Tall coral ridges extend seaward from 5 to 35 feet, variety of dive sites.

Coffins Patch: Sprawling patch reef packed with fish, including Nurse Sharks.

Big Pine Key

Looe Key: Large, fully developed outer bank reef, tall coral spurs of star and brain coral topped with seafans and branching corals separated by channels of white sand; many dive sites from 5 to 80 feet.

American Shoal: Shallow reef with many ledges, mix of soft and hard corals with encrusting sponges.

Adolphus Busch: 210-foot freighter sunk in 1998, sits upright in 100 feet of water near Looe Key.

Key West

Cayman Salvage Master: 187-foot cable layer upright in 90 feet, possible strong currents.

Eastern Dry Rocks: Extensive shallow coral reef with many ledges and large fish population.

Joe's Tug: 75-foot harbor tug upright in 65 feet, Schoolmasters and grunts cluster inside.

Nine Foot Stake: Extended shallow reef area with maximum depth of 25 feet, large brain coral formation, many fish.

Lost Reef: Gently sloping reef with shallow crest, several large pillar coral formations.



Barracuda on the wreck of the *Duane* off Key Largo.

Since Looe Keys' got a wreck named after a famous person, I wasn't really shocked when I saw Elvis walking down the dock with a scuba tank on his back and an electric guitar strapped on. Seems he was goin' to the Underwater Music Festival where they pipe music onto the reef so fish will know what Jimmy Buffet sounds like.

Maybe it was listening to Jimmy sing, "Margaritaville" that got my engine runnin' for Key West. Or that I wanted to stop by the Veteran's Memorial Park on Little Duck Key and salute all my military brothers. Whatever was pulling me south, I rolled into town about sunset and saw an almighty party brewin' down at Mallory Square. Reminded me of a Mardi Gras festival down in Cuba back in 1978. But they told me a crowd gathered there every day to watch the ol' fireball dip into the ocean. I heard some folks calling

BEST TIME TO VISIT

Year-Round (with the possibility of hurricanes in August and September).

TOPSIDE CLIMATE

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WATER TEMPERATURE

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EXCHANGE RATE

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TIME DIFFERENCE

Eastern Standard Time

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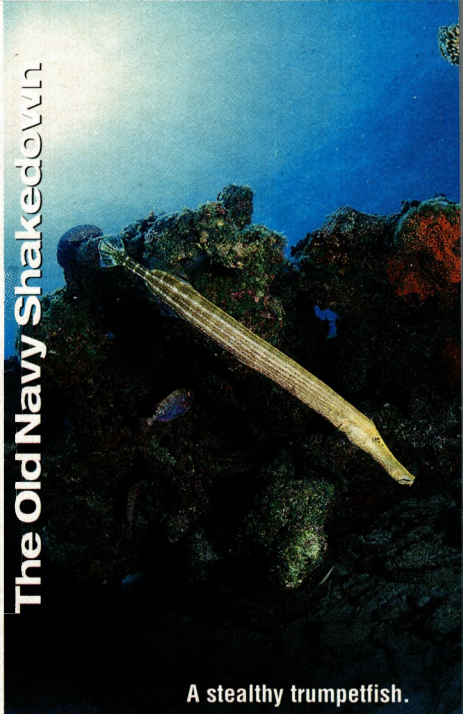


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that place Key Weird but I'll tell ya, I think that sunset thing is neat.

Speaking of parties, I found enough saloons around to keep a crew of sailors swaying. I admit, I liked that part. They sure let the good times roll in Key West but the fact is, I'm no pirate. I'm Navy by the book and, like I said, I got the medals to prove it. And well, that Key West is where pirates seem to turn professional!

Before I cast off I saw some nice coral that cranked my handle at Lost Reef and Sand Key. Compared to Duval Street, everything underwater was pretty tame. Shallow, not much current and spreads of coral as big as the deck of an aircraft carrier (we sailors call that a steel beach).

In case you hadn't noticed, I'm partial to wrecks. There's a little 75-foot tugboat they call *Joe's Tug* in about 65 feet of water. I couldn't see a whole lot except some hunker 'cudas and an old bicycle jammed in the gunnel. Looked like ol' Joe lost more'n his boat. They tell me the water clears up when the currents shift. Maybe so but we had mighty nice sight on another wreck, the 187-foot *Cayman Salvage Master*. She's pretty deep, about 90 feet and full of life—turtles, grouper, permit, octopus—plenty to keep my eyes happy.

Well, I'd made it all the way from Virginia to Key West and had good clean fun all the way. It took a lot of

soul searching and persuading from my buddies up in Key Largo, but that's where I decided to play out the last cards in my hand. Looks like they're going to lay me to rest off the island in 110 feet of water and all that sounds fine to me. I'll be in good company with those Coast Guard fellas and I'm sure plenty of divers will be hanging around. So that'll all be real nice.

Earlier on, I said you could call me Grover but my real name is USS



Sunset over Lower Matecumbe.

Spiegel Grove, a 510-foot Naval ship (LSD-32). Like I said, I was decommissioned in 1989 and some good folks in Key Largo saved my bacon from the scrap heap in 1996. They've been working on this deal for five years and it looks like it's finally gonna happen. When it does, I'm proud to say that I'll be the biggest damn shipwreck reef this side of Truk Lagoon. That, my friends, is another badge of honor I'll proudly wear. I just have one request before I bubble to the bottom, and that's for you to come on down and see me sometime. I'll always be home and my door is always open. You got my Navy word on that. God Bless America. 🐡

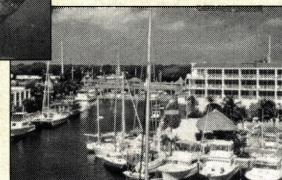
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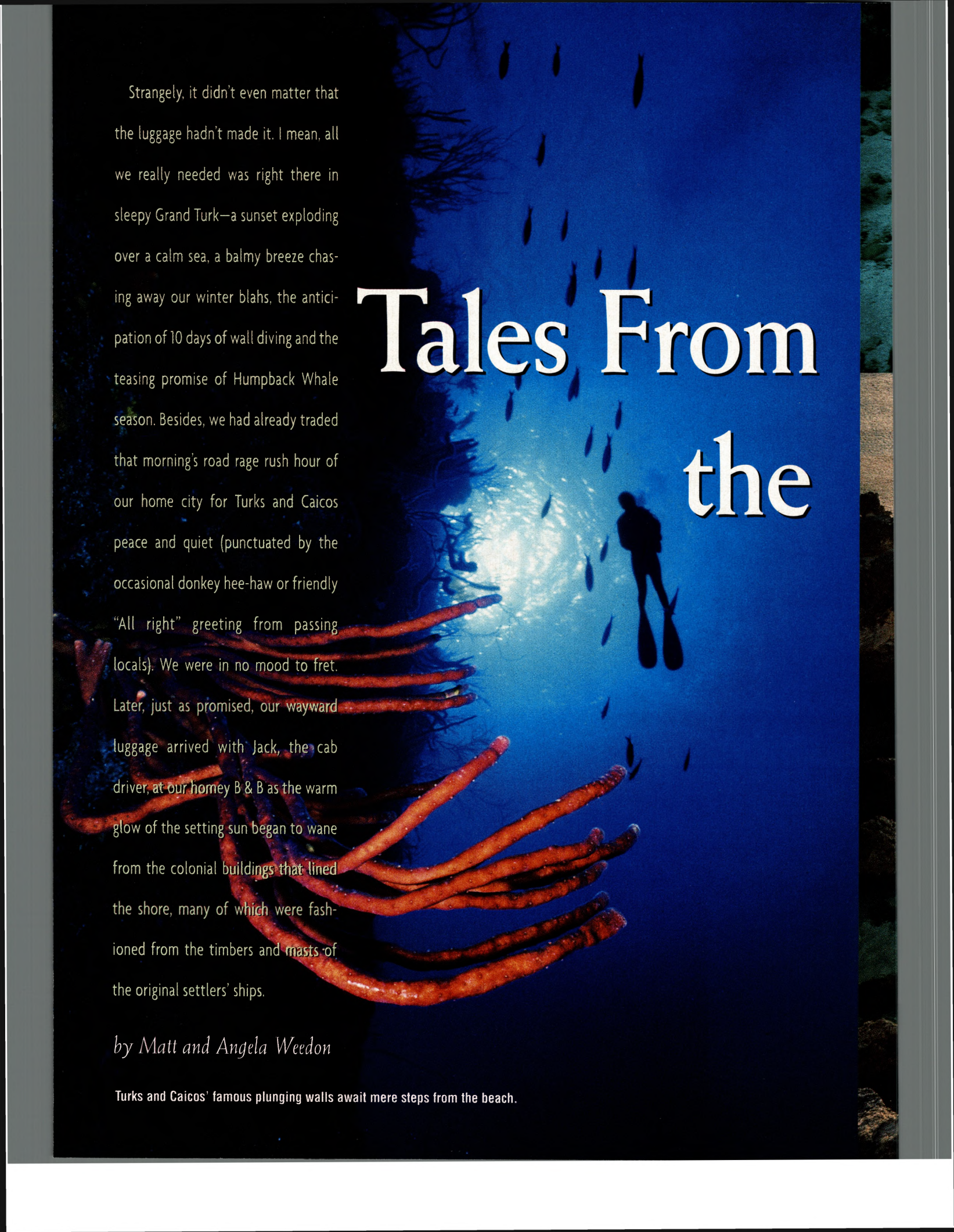


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An underwater photograph serves as the background for the page. In the foreground, several thick, orange-brown coral branches curve across the lower left. In the center, a bright light source, likely the sun, creates a shimmering effect in the blue water. To the right, a diver is visible in silhouette, swimming towards the light. Numerous small fish are scattered throughout the scene. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues and the warm tones of the coral.

Strangely, it didn't even matter that the luggage hadn't made it. I mean, all we really needed was right there in sleepy Grand Turk—a sunset exploding over a calm sea, a balmy breeze chasing away our winter blahs, the anticipation of 10 days of wall diving and the teasing promise of Humpback Whale season. Besides, we had already traded that morning's road rage rush hour of our home city for Turks and Caicos peace and quiet (punctuated by the occasional donkey hee-haw or friendly "All right" greeting from passing locals). We were in no mood to fret. Later, just as promised, our wayward luggage arrived with Jack, the cab driver, at our homey B & B as the warm glow of the setting sun began to wane from the colonial buildings that lined the shore, many of which were fashioned from the timbers and masts of the original settlers' ships.

Tales From the

by Matt and Angela Weedon

Turks and Caicos' famous plunging walls await mere steps from the beach.

An elegant Spotted Eagle Ray courses over the sand.

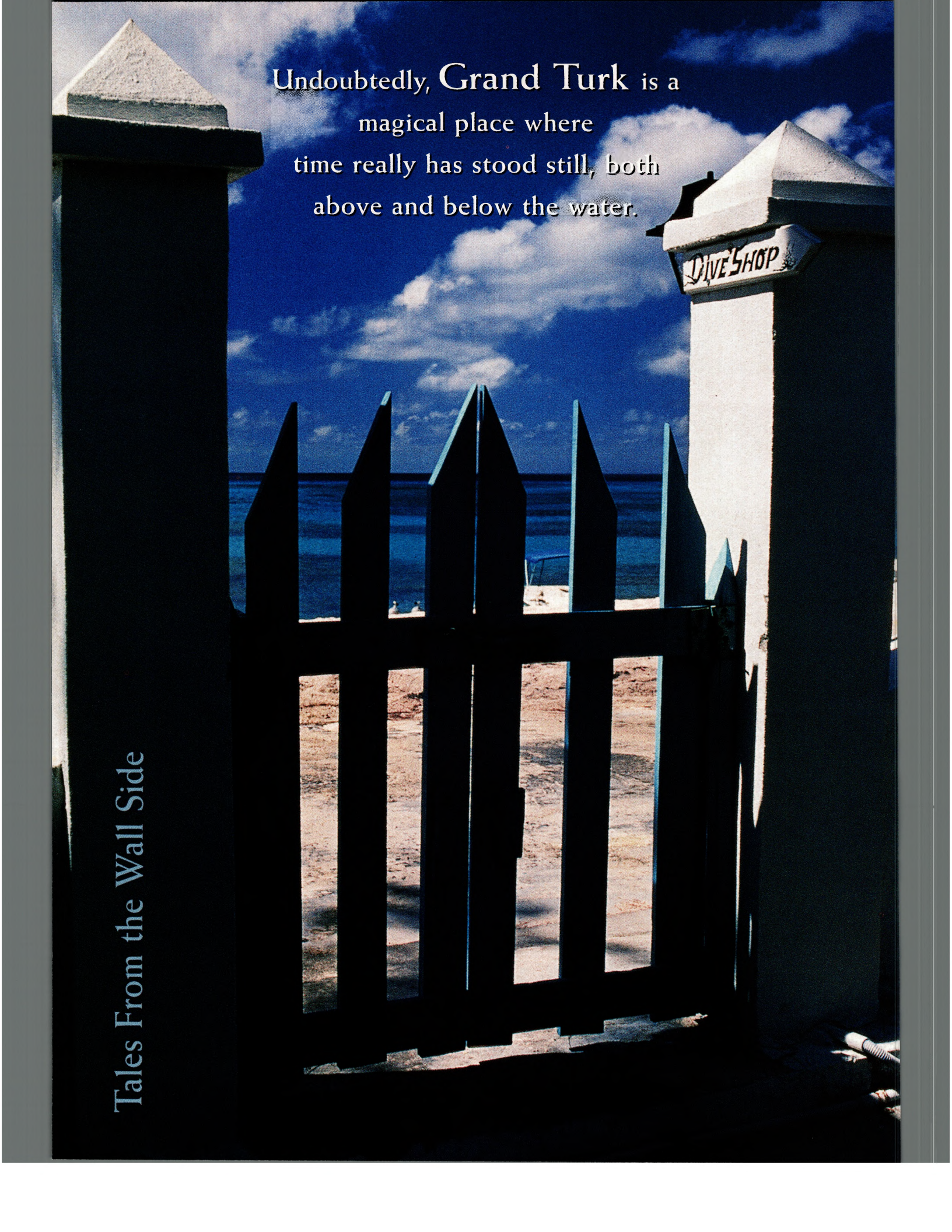
Silent cannons watch over the post office on Grand Turk.

Wall

Side

turks & caicos

This photo: A romantic moment off Salt Cay. Right: Large, healthy corals dominate Turks and Caicos' underwater world.



Undoubtedly, Grand Turk is a
magical place where
time really has stood still, both
above and below the water.

Tales From the Wall Side



Flamingo Tongue Cowrie

Plunging Into Grand Turk

Early the next day, we left the historic waterfront and headed inland. Remnants of a bygone salt industry take up the center of the island. Its salt ponds have become home to flamingos, osprey and many migratory birds. The whole place appeared to be stuck in some bygone era. We could only hope that the same would be true for the diving.

The dives off Grand Turk wall are just a stone's throw from the beach, which was a stone's throw from our hotel and dive shop. Dropping in to the water at Finbar Reef, we were awestruck by the healthiest Caribbean reef we could imagine. Lush, purple sea plumes and seafans adorned with Flamingo Tongue Cowries swayed gently in the soft current. Healthy boulder and star coral formations covered the bottom. Intermittent patches of sand held vast colonies of Garden Eels and the occasional Yellowhead Jawfish, while conch inched along the sand. Schools of French, White and Bluestriped Grunts hovered around the coral heads...and this was all just on top of the wall.

Most of the walls in Grand Turk start in as little as 25 to 30 feet and plunge into the blue abyss to 7,000 feet. On the vertical surface of the wall, massive black coral trees and dark hued deep-water gorgonians dominated the relief. We found huge lobsters and dinner plate-sized crabs. And, amazingly, at the end of the dive, we saw four Bottlenose Dolphins playing around and rubbing their bellies on the sand. We followed in hot pursuit and were able to stay with them for a minute or so, but they kept their distance. We had our own, "You should have been here yesterday," experience. On our first dive!

After a quick trip to the beach for our surface interval and a brief snorkel with those same four dolphins, we were ready to roll for dive number two. A nice mix of hard and soft corals and a friendly Nassau Grouper greeted us at Coral Gardens, while in the distance we were serenaded by the faint singing of Humpback Whales on their annual migration to their mating grounds at the Silver Bank, north of the Dominican Republic.

Over the next couple days we did more fantastic diving at sites called Amphitheater, Tunnels, Black Forest and Gorgonian Wall. Our biggest highlight, though, was an afternoon trip to a little island called Gibbs Cay. After pulling up to the beach we were immediately met by six or seven hungry Southern Stingrays. During the next several hours, we alternately lounged on the beach, feasted on a beach barbecue and swam one-on-one with the stingrays that brushed their velvety wings against our legs. Several Lemon Sharks and a big barracuda also made an appearance in the waist-deep water. On the 20-minute ride back to Grand Turk, we saw a mother and calf Humpback Whale on the surface. Undoubtedly, Grand Turk is a magical place where time really has stood still, both above and below the water.



Above: Southern Stingrays (and sometimes Lemon Sharks and barracudas) join the BBQ on Gibbs Cay.

Humpback Whale Migration

From January to March, nearly the entire north Atlantic Humpback Whale population makes its annual tropical migration to its breeding and calving grounds in the Silver Bank, north of the Dominican Republic. Peak season for whale travel just so happens to take them right through the Turks and



Photo/Tom Conlin

Caicos. Although most of them traverse the deep passage between Grand Turk and South Caicos, we came to find out later on our trip that a few whales like to also pay a courtesy visit to Provo. During the whale migratory months, the dive operations in Grand Turk offer special whale-watching excursions when the weather permits. Also, several live-aboards offer weeklong whale-watching and snorkeling trips. (Both Peter Hughes' *Wind Dancer* and the *Turks and Caicos Aggressor* leave the T&C during these months for their Silver Bank Humpback itinerary; Peter Hughes' second T&C live-aboard, the *Sea Dancer*, remains in the islands. A third live-aboard, the *Bottom Time II* also visits the Silver Bank for the Humpbacks during Jan-Mar.) Or, you might just get lucky and see them on a dive. We seemed to be one step behind them our whole trip, but it just goes to show the unpredictability of diving the Turks and Caicos Islands.



Above: These lobsters are strictly off the menu. Below: Once the heart of a now silent salt industry, salinas (salt ponds) dominate the center of Grand Turk.

Sleepy Salt Cay

We were off to Salt Cay the next day. With less than 70 full-time residents, five cars and 20 golf carts (the preferred form of transportation), Salt Cay is even more of a blast from the past than Grand Turk. Its salt industry also "dried up" in the '60s—and time *definitely* froze on this tiny island. With several guesthouses and small-scale accommodations, Salt Cay certainly appeals to those wanting to get away from it all. It even makes tranquil Grand Turk seem busy!

As in Grand Turk, the dive sites are



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Tales From the Wall Side

a short run from shore with walls starting in as little as 30 feet of water. On our dives at Kelly's Follies and Powerhouse, large schools of grunts and Schoolmasters—a literal wall of fishy-yellow—hung under the boat, and

With fewer than a 1,000 divers a year, Salt Cay diving is definitely in prime condition.

we found several small Nurse Sharks sleeping under ledges. Just as in Grand Turk, the wall was covered in healthy coral growth. With fewer than a 1,000 divers a year, Salt Cay diving is definitely in prime condition.

In addition to the wall diving, Salt Cay also boasts the H.M.S. *Endymion*, an 18th century wreck with 18 cannons, scattered anchors and chain.

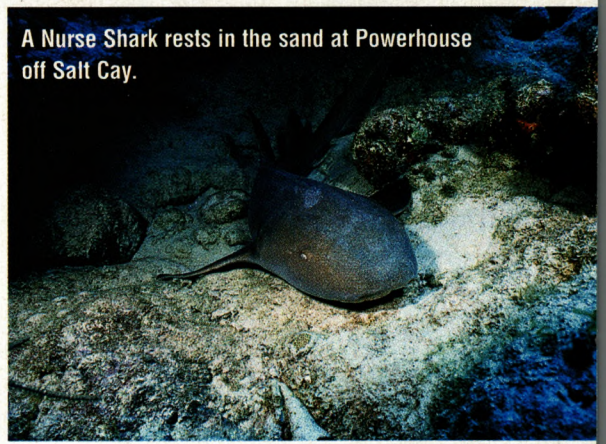
Fast-paced Provo


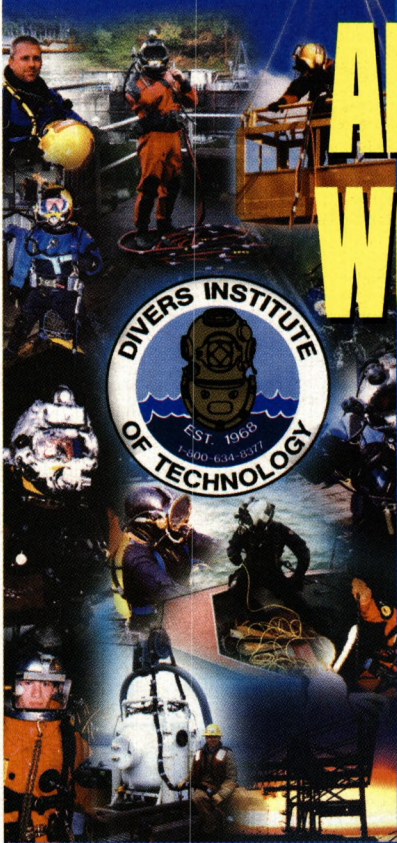
While Grand Turk and Salt Cay remain rooted in the past, the 21st century has definitely gripped Provo. With rapid resort and real estate growth, the island has progressed remarkably during the last 10 years. Every possible amenity is now available. Yet, with the protective, collaborative efforts of the Turks and Caicos government and the dive operators, the diving remains world-class.

We were fortunate to dive Grace Bay, Northwest Point, West Caicos and French Cay during our time in Provo. Wall diving was the game once again (except in Grace Bay), and the reefs plummet from 50 feet or so into oblivion. Luxuriant soft coral growth and hard coral greeted us at French Cay on each of our dives there. West Caicos walls were covered in sponge growth and healthy plate corals. We were shadowed throughout our dives by patrolling Caribbean Reef Sharks, huge Spotted Eagle Rays, and schools of Horse-eye Jacks, barracuda and Atlantic Spadefish. At Magic Mushroom in West Caicos, a huge Humpback Whale made a surface appearance several hundred yards from the boat. Searching frantically on the dive, we never were lucky enough to meet up, but did hear its distant and mesmerizing song.

While walking down the white

A Nurse Shark rests in the sand at Powerhouse off Salt Cay.





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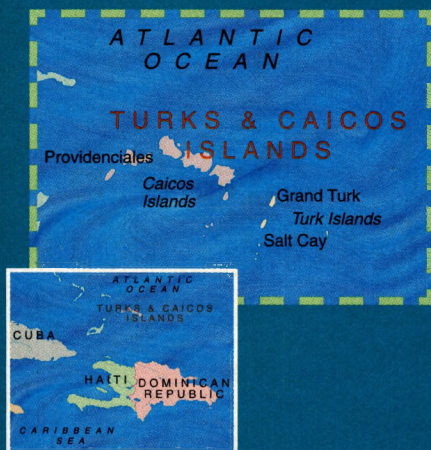
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sand beach in Grace Bay after our last day of diving, the sun was setting behind us and an enormous rainbow appeared. Half a roll of film later, it was the perfect ending to a fantastic trip. From Provo—all grown up and

Lovely Grace Bay, Provo. The end of a perfect day.



action-packed—to its siblings Grand Turk and Salt Cay—humble, laid back and quiet—it seems that one thing has remained the same through the passing of time: the diving. 🐠

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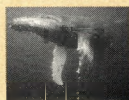
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p u s h

We were well into the after dinner drinks when my buddy leaned across the table and whispered, "Hey, you wanna see *Carrie Lee*?"

His eyes were shifty, like a pimp lining me up with a hooker. But I knew *Carrie Lee*. She might have been a wreck but she was no street walker.

"How deep?" I asked.

"Hundred and sixty to the stern. The bow's over 240."

"You're nuts. No way," I said. "The *Carrie Lee* is off limits."

"Come on man. Don't be a wimp."

"Even if I wanted to," I said, "nobody would take us there."

"Don't worry," he smiled, "I know this guy."

I felt a chill run up my neck like I was in a dark alley dealing dirty secrets. But I was in Grand Cayman and this guy was peddling deep dives like a fake Rolex out of his trench coat.

"Everybody's doing it," he persisted.

"And does that make it right?" I asked, quoting my mother.

That stopped him cold. I obviously wasn't ready to join his club.

The next day they strapped on their aluminum 80s, blasted down 200 feet to the wreck and carved another notch in their idiot belts. The year was 1989, before technical diving had twirled out of the closet.

C A Y M A N

Like those clowns, I'd done 200 feet before, just to say I had. One time, I even hit 250 in the Blue Hole. But that wasn't technical diving. That was just stupid. And there were too many dinks like us out there diving to the edge on single tanks with no back up. Back then, we kept it real hush hush. A secret society of idiots.

Fast forward to January 2001. I'm back in Grand Cayman about to do a wall dive to 190 feet. But this time it's all legal—part of the regular schedule at Dive Tech, Grand Cayman's first technical diving operation. No bribes to boat captains or sneaking around under the cloak of darkness. Our flight plan has been cleared. My dive buddy is none other than Nancy Romanica, owner of Dive Tech and Grand Cayman's foremost technical guru.

e

i n g t h e l i m i t

by Fred D. Garth

At 180 feet of depth, the *Carrie Lee* awaits the exploration of Tek Divers.

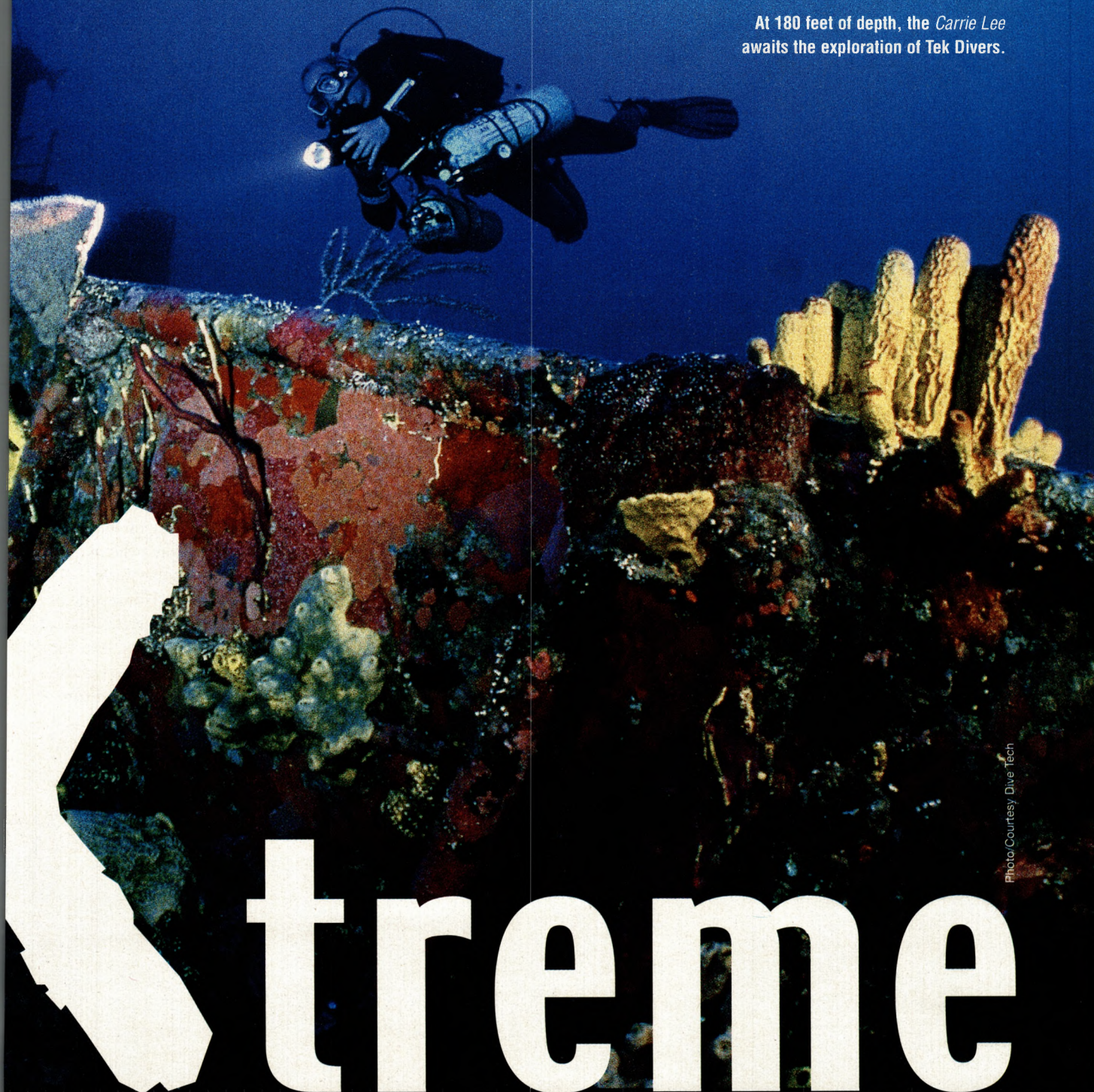


Photo: Courtesy Dive Tech

We're both decked out in 200 pounds of metal. I'm traveling with twin aluminum 80s mounted on a steel backplate and connected by a manifold with an isolator valve. Strapped under my armpit is a 60-cubic-foot cylinder with 80 percent oxygen for decompression. I have redundant

regulators, independent bladders in my BC, two computers and a laminated chart with my dive profile. To beginners, it sounds (and looks) complicated, but tekkies know that I'm dressed in a very basic tek rig. Nothing fancy. Just the right tools to get me there . . . and back. I like that idea.

CAYMAN

To top it off, we're flying scooters. As we buzz over the wall's edge at 50 feet, I point the nose straight down and ride happily into the blue. That familiar lure of the deep tugs at my soul and it seems like I can go on forever. But I fight off the narcotic urge to plunge into the abyss and bank out of my nose dive at 180 feet, zipping horizontally among Volkswagen-sized barrel sponges. The North Wall is as dramatic as ever but at this depth, we're beyond the heavy traffic line and into the untouched zone. Perfectly pristine.

Although we have tons of air, we start back after we rack up 10 minutes of decompression. We work our way up the wall and into the shallows to burn off the nitrogen. Dive time: 70 minutes. This is the way it was meant to be. Awesome diving and the freedom to explore. Times have changed. Apparently, they're taking this new Millennium thing seriously down here.

Nancy navigates spot on to the dock at Cobalt Coast Resort, my home base for the next few days. It's the ultimate shore dive, a three-tank scooter run. Of course, with doubles and a deco bottle, it's three tanks all on one dive.

As the island's newest resort, Cobalt Coast points directly north, paying homage to the famed North Wall. With a capacity of only 50 guests, mostly in luxury suites, I've been bumped up to first class. The place is intimate and elegant

with the three essential ingredients: a giant hot tub, a pool and gourmet food. It has the look and feel of an upscale estate—the Hamptons with world-class diving on the doorstep. To ice the cake, Nancy has built a brand new Dive Tech center on site. Life is rough, but somehow I'll manage.

That I was sent to Grand Cayman to do an article on technical diving for *Skin Diver* is gooey with irony. Back in 1992, *Skin Diver* was adamant in its opposition to tek diving, but, thankfully, there's a whole new hip regime at *Skin Diver* that has embraced diving's progress. Otherwise, I'd be home changing diapers and writing for *Offspring* magazine.

It took a while, but Grand Cayman eventually clicked into the tek thing too. Nancy Romanica deserves most of the credit. Her technical diving operation opened in the mid-1990s without a sanction from the Cayman Watersports Association. Persistence finally got her licensed and she ended up writing most of the standards for others who would follow. And so they have.

When Sunset House, one of the oldest dive-specific hotels on the island, jumps into the fray you know the tides are turning. Enter Reg Creighton and Erika Haley, former big wigs in Canada's technical community. Respected tekkies, Reg and Erika have brought mixed gases, semi-closed and closed-circuit rebreathers to Sunset House.

"We like to cruise the wall at 200 feet for about an hour,"



Pristine sponges grow to massive proportions in the deep zone.

Photos/Courtesy Dive Tech

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Reg said. "Then come up to 100 feet for a while, then to 60 and finish our deco in the shallows right off the resort. It's not uncommon for our rebreather dives to last for three or four hours."

At first I was blown away. Four hours! That's unreal, not to mention a mean case of prune fingers. But as I listened, it began to sink in. This was the rebirth of Grand Cayman. Virgin territory, new discoveries, less restrictions, rebreathers, mixed gases. This time, Grand Cayman has stepped to the plate and hammered a grand slam. Yet, technical diving is still in the first inning. And while almost everyone offers nitrox, only Dive Tech, Sunset House and Ocean Frontiers at East End are immersed in the game.

To my chagrin, I had to pass on Reg's monster dive plan and drive east to Ocean Frontiers. A journalist's work is never done. I hooked up with co-owner Steve Broadbelt and toured the newly constructed facility, which is just a half-mile from the original shop. Ocean Frontiers now has a deep pool, full blending station and a well-appointed shop overlooking the eastern barrier reef. Like its west side counterparts, Ocean Frontiers has full tek rigs including Drager rebreathers, nitrox, scooters and mixed gases. Its uniqueness also extends offshore. A 6,000-foot wall is just five minutes by boat, with gobs of soft corals (including the black stuff), prolific caves, tunnels and swim-throughs. Ocean Frontiers also has Grand Cayman's only shark dive.

"We don't hand feed the sharks," Steve told me. "We put the bait in the water, stand by and usually get about 10 sharks—all reef sharks."

Even further east, the sister islands of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman are also tekking it. Not to be outdone by their big brother, the little sisters have joined in. They haven't taken the mixed gas plunge yet, but Reef Divers at Little Cayman Beach Resort and Brac Reef Resort are dialed in on nitrox and Drager semi-closed rebreathers. Of course, the real pull of the sisters is their seductive remoteness. Over there, you can get certified in hammock napping and still tweak your senses underwater on every dive. Will technical diving ever go to the

limit in the sisters? I'd put money on it.

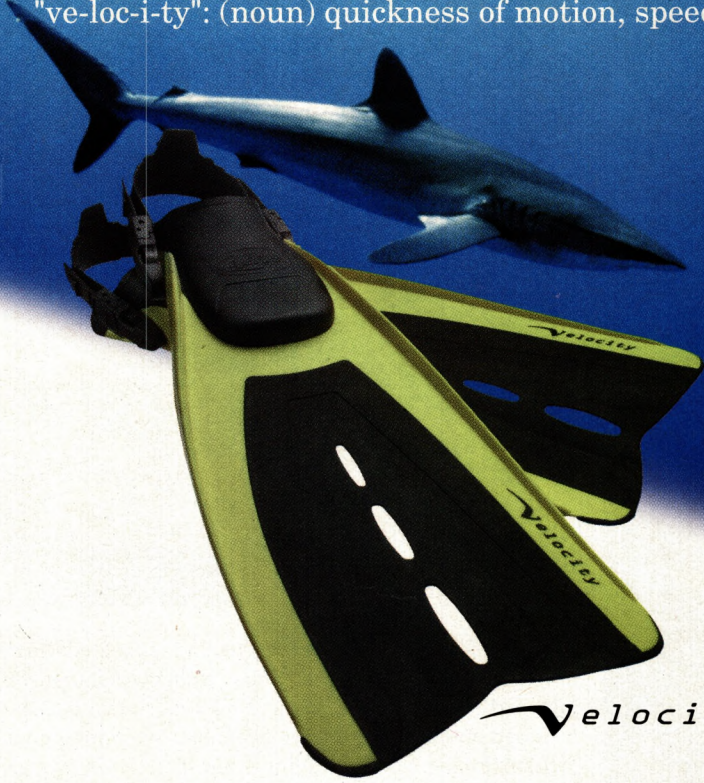
Unfortunately, my schedule doesn't allow a hop over to the sisters, but at least I have one more tek dive left before I return home. So it's exceedingly appropriate that I find myself standing on the dive platform of the vessel *ATA-tude* about to dive the *Carrie Lee* for the first time. After more than a decade, I'm finally getting the chance to do her.

For tek divers, one hour, closed-circuit rebreather dives at 200 feet, with two hour ascent/deco will blow your mind.

The water's so clear I can see the wreck as soon as we submerge. When we reach the wreck, I look up at our

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boat driver snorkeling on the surface. I can even see clouds passing by the silhouette of the *ATA-tude*. Now I understand how those early cowboys had a false sense of security; here, 180 feet is alarmingly benign. Escape doesn't seem that far away, until you have to hump it on a free ascent. With the tools I have, that's remote.

My Dive Tech guides are Tara Cunningham, a world-class freediver and runway model candidate, and Ian Thomas, a Brit who's diving the Buddy Inspiration, a compact, closed-circuit rebreather made in his homeland. Ian glides bubble-free around the wheelhouse as Tara and I spew massive amounts of air into the water column.

If she wanted to show off, Tara could hit the *Carrie Lee* with just mask, fins and snorkel (her best is 154 feet), but today she's tekking out like me. I'm not surprised that the song, "Everything is Beautiful," is looping through my brain. Still, I realize that minimal traffic on *Carrie Lee* keeps the wandering rope sponges and delicate crinoids immaculate. Everything really is beautiful and I feel fine.

The wreck looks as if it's sliding down a ski slope. It's perched at near-

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The sponge encrusted bow of the *Carrie Lee*.



Photo/Courtney Platt

ly a 45 degree angle on the edge of the wall with cables and dock lines trailing back up the slope like ski ropes. The bow is literally hanging over the wall and I'm compelled to kick down and explore it. But at 240 feet, it's beyond our planned limit. Tara and Ian do it regularly on mixed gases. I have to settle for their photos.

After 20 minutes at 180 feet, we ease up the anchor line and begin our deco. The wreck fades into the blue, but is still clearly visible at our first stop in 50 feet. After 30 minutes of deco we're back at the surface. It took more than 10 years, but *Carrie Lee* and I finally consummated our relationship. For some reason, I crave a cigarette. 🚬

Special thanks to Cayman Airways, Dive Tech, Cobalt Coast Resort, Sunshine Suites and Economy Car Rental for their assistance and support for this article.

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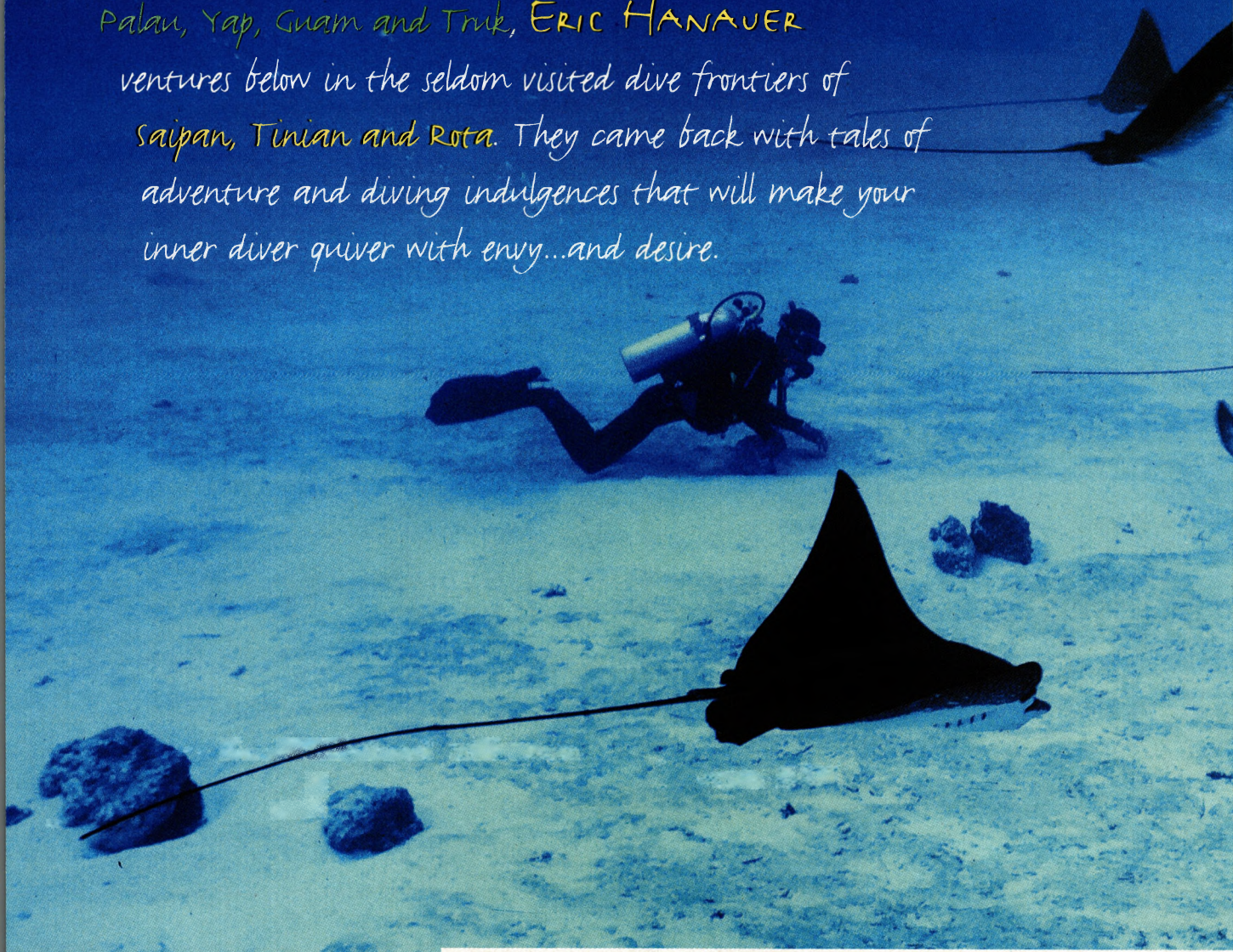
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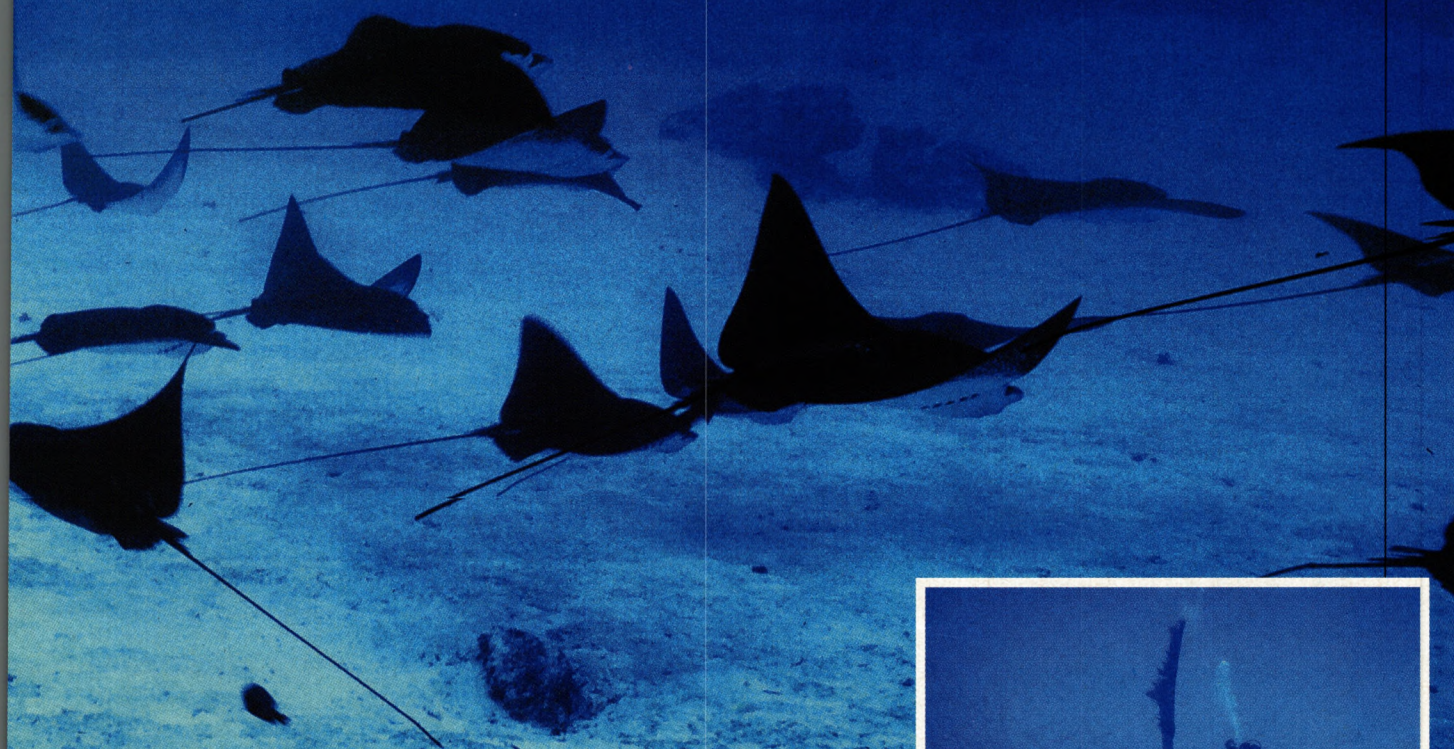
CAST AWA

While **BRAD DOANE** journeys deep into the blue of the more well known side of **WESTERN MICRONESIA**—**Palau, Yap, Guam and Truk**, **ERIC HANAVER** ventures below in the seldom visited dive frontiers of **Saipan, Tinian and Rota**. They came back with tales of adventure and diving indulgences that will make your inner diver quiver with envy...and desire.

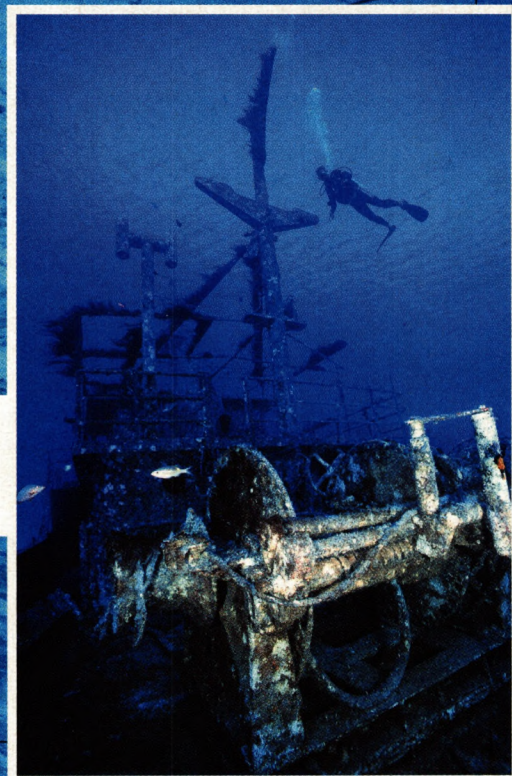


Off the coast of Saipan, these Spotted Eagle Rays are anything but typically skittish.

YS



Right: The *Snake Eyes* wreck, a 135-foot Chinese fishing trawler off Rota.
Below: The silent WW II memorial guns of Saipan. Below left: A hawkfish nestled in the coral.



DIVER ERRANT IN THE FAR FLUNG PACIFIC

by Brad Doane

Palau, Yap, Truk and Guam

No compass; no map; no global positioning system. All of which would now be useless to our guide anyway—he's asleep. Rocketing across the silky waters of the lagoon, we are on a collision course with history.



In addition to its famous walls, many intact WW II wrecks pockmark the seafloor off Palau.

I turn to the man driving the boat with hopes of an explanation of this peculiar style of navigation, but the aging islander is looking away, squinting into the early morning sun. Eventually, the guide awakens and rises to his feet. Now well offshore, he looks back and forth at two islands several miles away and points to an imaginary "X" on the surface. Then, without warning, he dives off the boat and disappears. When he resurfaces, he calmly explains in broken English that she is under the boat. One hundred and twenty-five feet beneath the surface and alone in the vast desert of the lagoon floor, she is shrouded behind a velvety blue curtain that does not betray her presence. Yet, he has found her. I can't believe it.

He is a member of a local island family that for over 20 years has used palm trees and mountain peaks as road signs to find this latent lady and 60 of her sisters. And she

is the *Fumizuki Maru*, a destroyer who fell victim to the 1944 aerial assault that wiped out the Japanese fleet gathered here in Chuuk (Truk) lagoon. Now, slowly dying a second death as the deteriorating effects of sea and steel

take hold, she and the others have erupted with new life. After half a century of lying in the protected tropical waters of the lagoon, they have become catalysts in the proliferation of soft corals, seafans, fish and invertebrates. And the tanks, planes, trucks and ammunition that still line their decks and holds are carpeted with the unstoppable life of the sea.

I explore these colossal carcasses of war, their multi-hued hulks embodying the destructive powers of man and the regenerating forces of the sea. And that is why I am here. Errant, in the far-flung reaches of the Pacific, traversing an expanse loosely referred to as western Micronesia. I have come not only to revel in the impossible beauty of this part of the world, but to be enriched by it.

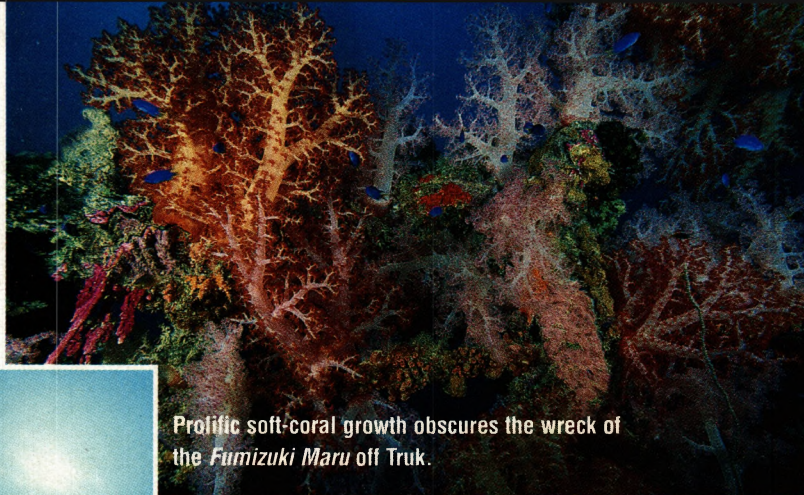
For three weeks I roamed through the islands of the great Caroline and Mariana archipelagos—Palau, Yap and Guam. And each day the pages of my experience filled with adventures and emotions unfamiliar to me. Often it was geological wonders beyond my wildest fantasies. Like in Guam, where I sank through a hole in the top of a reef, only to emerge 60 feet deeper into a sea so vibrant and full of sea life, it sent shivers up my spine. Or in Palau, where I passed through an opening in the sea floor, and surfaced in the belly of an island. And in Yap, where gleaming white sand filled narrow channels snaking through a shallow portion of the reef, eventually spilling out onto a phenomenal wall aptly named for its innumerable lionfish.

I dived at sites that were legendary and lived up to their reputations, such as Palau's Blue Corner, New Drop-off and Peleliu Express. While others, unknown, produced all time highs. One such surprise lay inside a bustling harbor off Guam. Where, in just 10 feet of

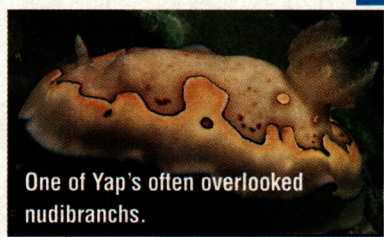


water, an anemone-carpeted a section of reef the size of a dinner table, and was tended by 20 or more anemone fish that flitted in and out its lethal fingers.

I was also educated. I learned it is unwise to hover over the nest of the Triton Triggerfish. Large and formidable for a colorful reef dweller, this fiery fish viciously attacked my camera and strobes before leaving dental impressions in my fins. I learned that the sea often closes one door, only to open another. As



Prolific soft-coral growth obscures the wreck of the *Fumizuki Maru* off Truk.



One of Yap's often overlooked nudibranchs.



It's hard to get in the waters off Yap and not encounter a Manta Ray.

was the case in Yap when a dive for Mantas turned up squat. But in their place emerged a raucous pack of two-foot-long, juvenile Gray Reef Sharks, shadowing Dogtooth Tuna and Spotted Eagle Rays.

There were encounters with marine life that were as unexpected as they were unforgettable. Inside a pass in Yap's barrier reef, I clung to the sea floor in a raging current as a Manta hovered so closely above my head that I could see the color in the eyes

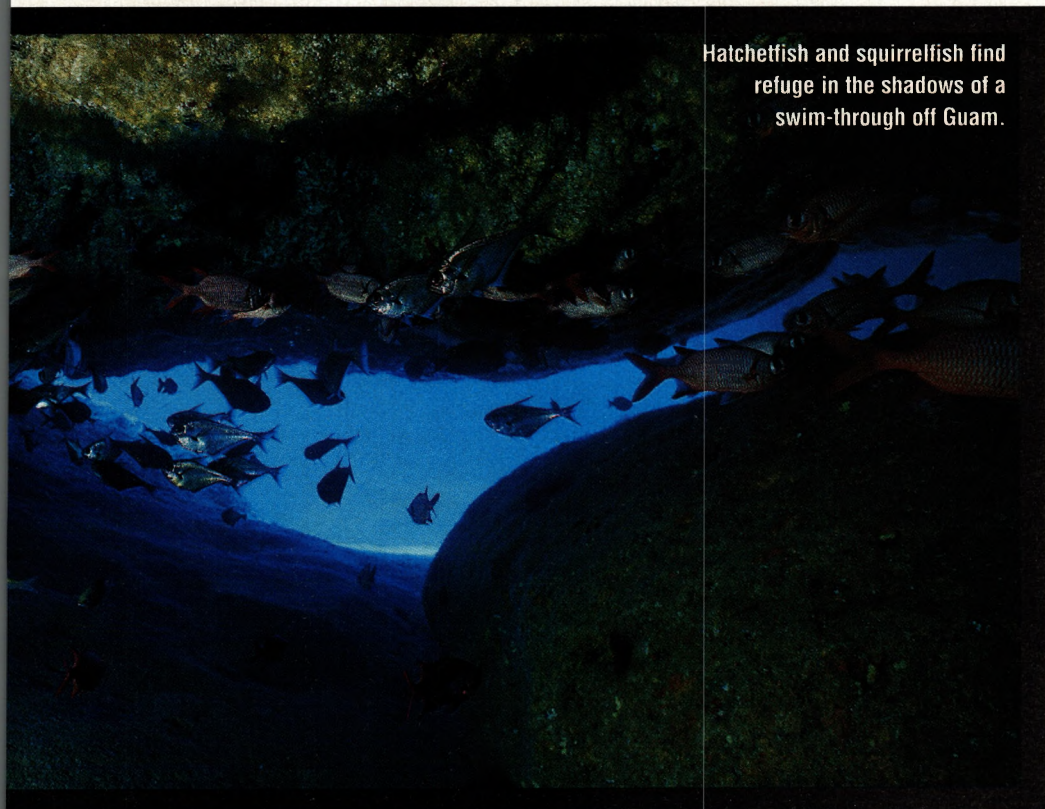
of the three-inch wrasses that were cleaning its enormous gills. And in Palau, I had the single most "animal" intense dive of my life. Caught in a biological tornado of sharks and fish towering over 100 feet high, I was so consumed in the spectacle that I dared not blink.

I also fell in love. As I walked along a quiet island road, a car pulled to a stop in the street next to me. Making the concerted effort to stand up on the seat so she could lean out the window, a little brown face with big eyes and ponytails emerged from the back seat. She smiled sweetly, waved and said "hello" with the voice of a tiny angel. And my heart skipped a beat.

I spent time whenever possible with the people of the islands. I chewed betel nut and drank Budweiser with the Yapese, and spent time in a *faluw*—a traditional house for men. I sat and talked with the endemic Chamorro on Guam, and together we watched the sun set over the Philippine Sea. And I ate a home cooked meals with kids in Palau.

I had come to Western Micronesia seeking treasure. The sort of riches bestowed upon those willing to immerse themselves wholly in the medley of these culturally and experientially rich islands. Like all travel, this bounty has the power to enrich and change your life. 🐟

A special thanks Continental Airlines., Blue Lagoon Divers, Blue Lagoon Resort, Guam Tropical Dive Station, Plumeria Garden Hotel, Trader's Ridge Resort, Manta Ray Bay Hotel, Yap Divers, Fish 'n Fins and Palau Pacific Resort.



Hatchetfish and squirrelfish find refuge in the shadows of a swim-through off Guam.

MARIANA'S ODYSSEY

By Eric Hanauer

Discovering Saipan, Tinian and Rota

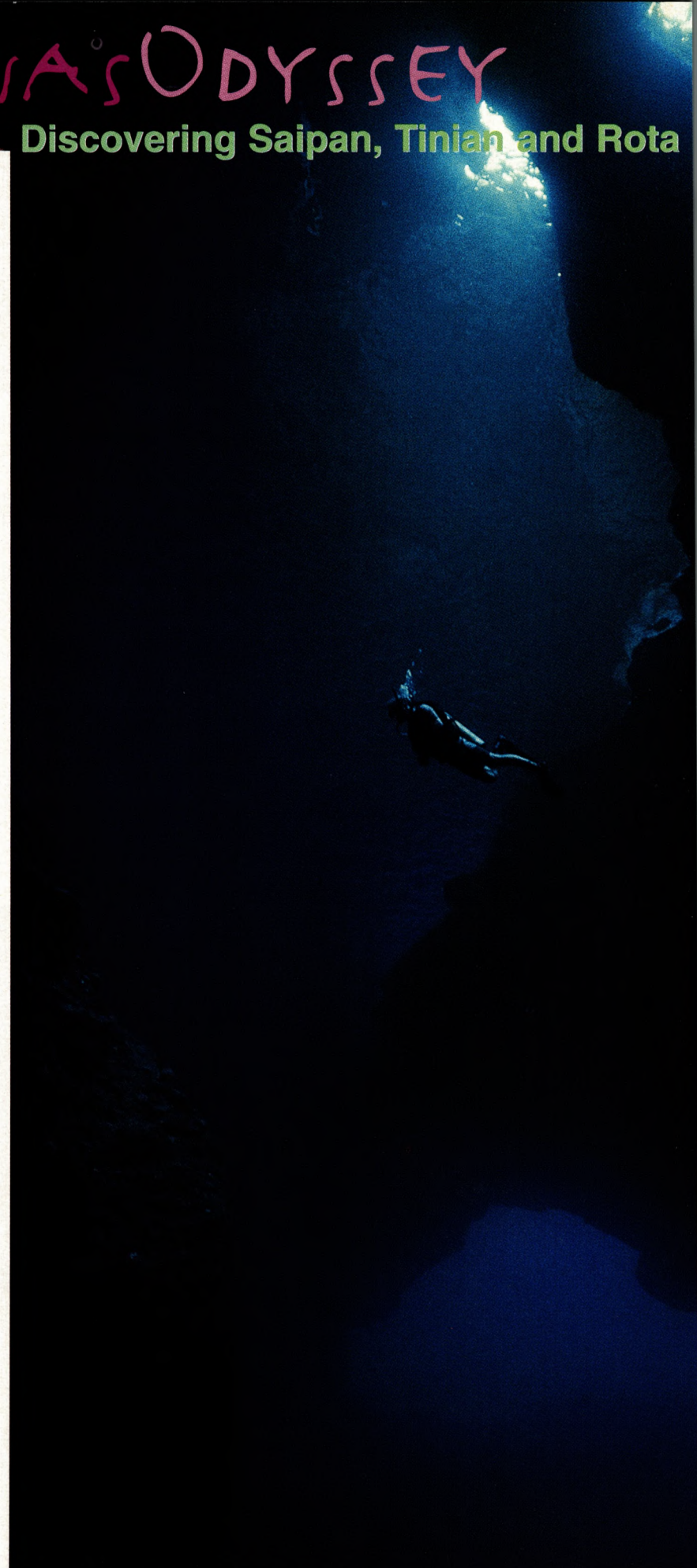
The rays were kind of skittish yesterday." I'd heard this sort of disclaimer too many times before, so cynical thoughts were going through my head as I pulled myself down the anchor line against the current, then kicked along featureless sand at 30 feet. After a few minutes, they suddenly appeared: a horde of Spotted Eagle Rays hovering a few feet off the sand. Eagle Rays normally allow only brief encounters, gracefully flying by in the water column on their way to someplace else, but this was different. These guys weren't going anywhere.

I settled a few feet away from the other divers and took in the scene. A quick head count totaled 26 rays. The oval spots on their backs had a brownish tinge, and the base of their tails were bristling with multiple stingers. Their faces were almost cowl-like with upturned noses and funny little mouths underneath. As long as we hugged the bottom they remained calm, but as soon as anyone rose above them, the entire school would swim a few yards away.

What were they doing here? Schooling behavior among Spotted Eagle Rays is usually associated with feeding, but there wasn't any of that going on. Occasionally one or two individuals would swim into the reef area where juvenile wrasses provided cleaning services. This wasn't happening at one of Micronesia's glamour dive locations, but rather off the coast of Saipan, a place usually overlooked by Americans. The islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota belong to the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the westernmost outpost of the United States. For Asian visitors, it's a convenient vacationland where they can shop, relax and dive. For Americans heading to Palau or Yap via Guam, a side trip to Saipan or Rota offers a chance to get acclimated to the region and its critters, experience some unique diving, personalized service and a taste of history. Each island is a quick 30 minute flight from Guam.

Saipan

Once a Japanese wartime stronghold, Saipan today is a stronghold of tourism, with half a million visitors a year, mostly

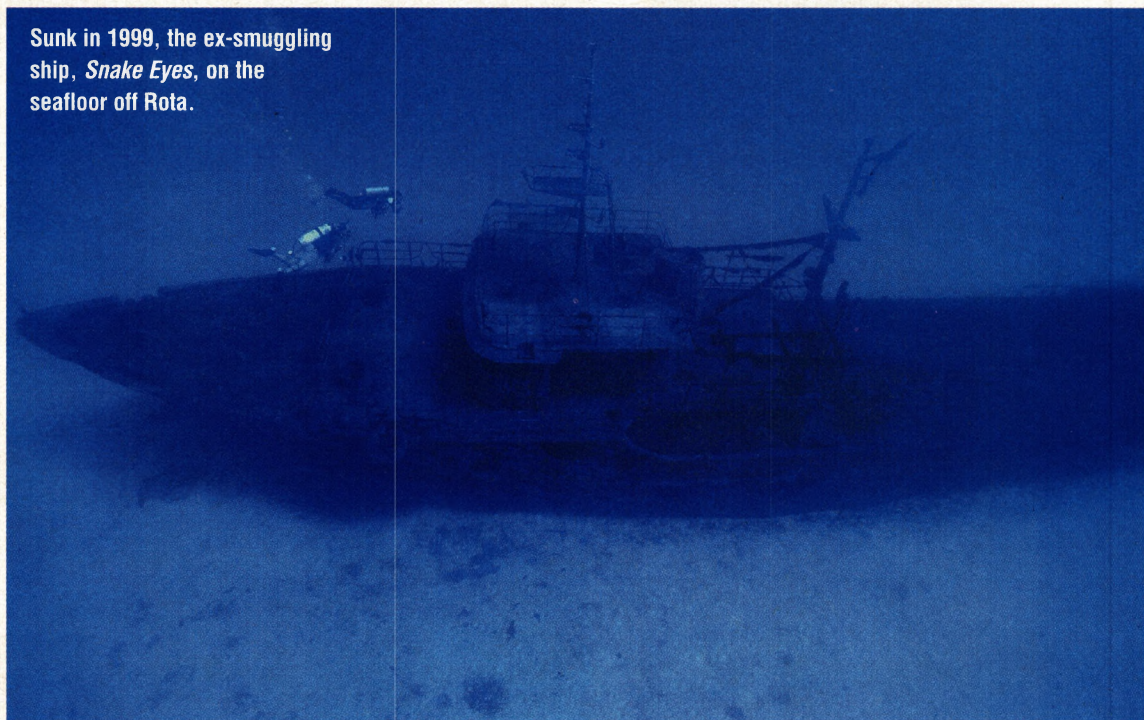


from Asia. Beach Road in Garapan is crammed with high-rise hotels, restaurants and shops. But the north end of the island is still unspoiled jungle. When American forces invaded in June, 1944, Japanese civilians by the hundreds committed suicide by jumping off two sheer cliffs.

guns serve as war memorials.

Rick Northen of Stingray Divers considers Banzai Point the best dive on Saipan. A reef lying perpendicular to the cliff, it's diveable from April through August. "Every time we drop in, there's a school of fish—barracuda, jacks or trevally," he stated. "It's a sheer drop,

Sunk in 1999, the ex-smuggling ship, *Snake Eyes*, on the seafloor off Rota.



Eerie shafts of light sift through the dark shadows of Saipan's famous Grotto. Below: A whole flock of Pyramid Butterflyfish.

Banzai Cliff overlooks the ocean and the rugged coastline. The white terns circling below are said to be carrying the souls of the dead. Ironically, this is also the location of one of Saipan's best dive sites. And nearby, but further inland is Suicide Cliff. At its base the remains of Japanese tanks and

an impressive view." At 70 feet are caverns with seafans hanging from the entrance. Near the cliff are several swim-throughs.

Saipan's most renowned dive site is a sinkhole called The Grotto. Most divers enter the water from the parking lot, and walk down a stairway of 109 steps. At the bottom is a pool of water shaded by a cantilevered, half dome of rock. It is illuminated by a misty blue light filtering from three subterranean openings leading to the sea. Rick described six different dives that could be made from there, depending upon the chosen route. About 50 yards to the left is The Batcave, a vast, dark cavern. To the right, a plateau drops to 90 feet. Over the edge, a broad vista reveals turtles and barracuda. Drift back to the middle entrance of The Grotto and you'll be swarmed by Pyramid Butterflyfish expecting to be fed.

Tinian

During the final year of World War II, the twin airstrips of Tinian



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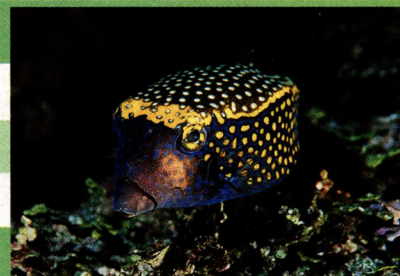
Approximately 82 to 85°F

EXCHANGE RATE

USD is the official currency.

TIME DIFFERENCE

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Photo/Eric Hanauer

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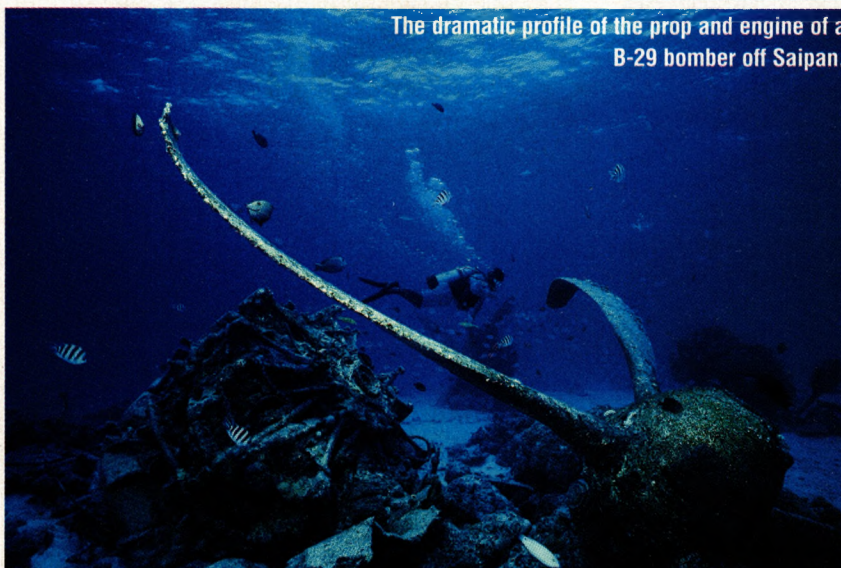
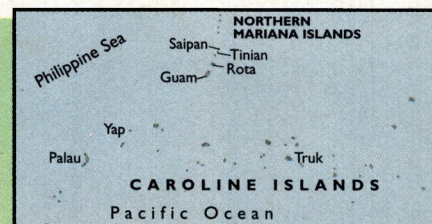
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The dramatic profile of the prop and engine of a B-29 bomber off Saipan.

were among the busiest in the world. In August 1945, two B 29s took off from there four days apart to drop the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs, effectively ending the war. The airstrips are still there, unused and overgrown by jungle. Palm trees and flowers grow where the deadliest

weapons once rested. Simple plaques in Japanese and English mark the spot.

Although it's only three miles from Saipan, Tinian is rarely visited by divers. It's mostly ranchland and jungle. The fast, modern ferries that service it also provide an easy way for divers from Saipan to add an exotic

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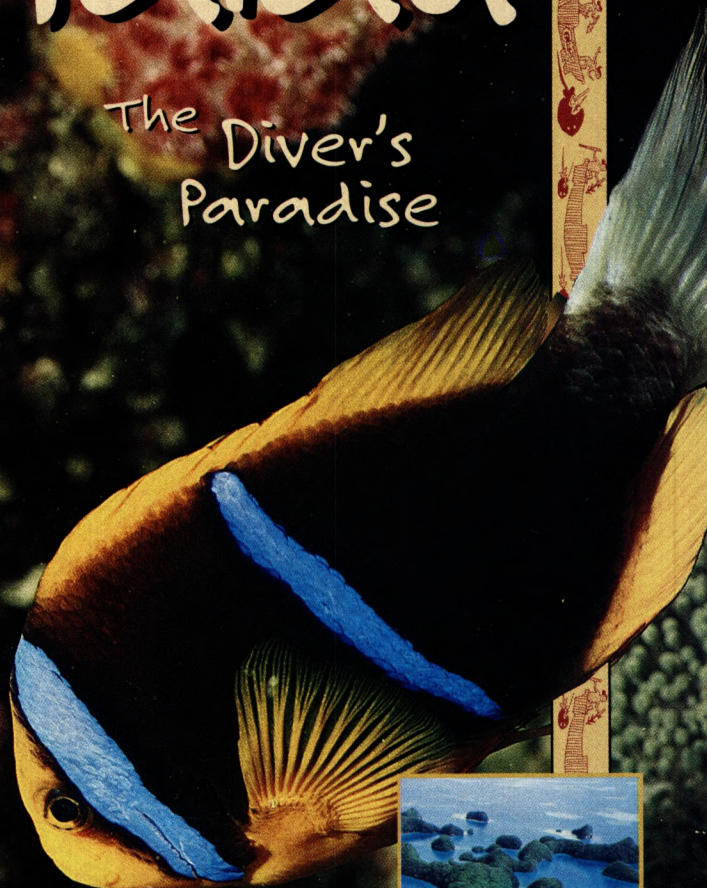
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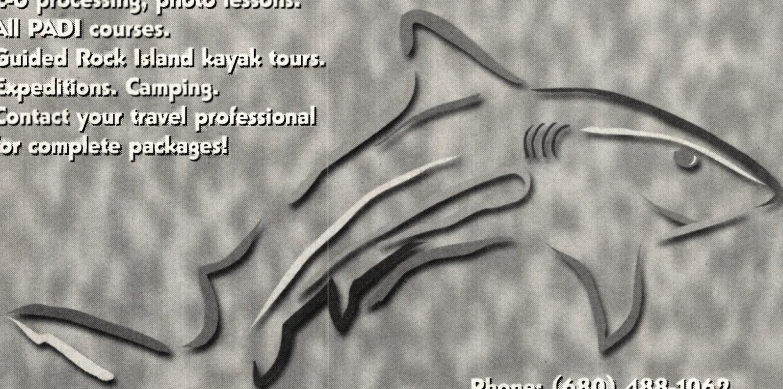
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MARIANAS ODYSSEY

new destination to their logbook.

Tinian has its own Grotto, but this one is a wide open underwater cavern with a large front entrance and a smaller one behind. Nurse Sharks and stingrays are frequent visitors. Two Coral Heads is a close-up photo spot with delicate hard corals that have seen little diver pressure. The area abounds with colorful angel and butterflyfish. Other sites include North Point, a dumping ground for World War II wreckage, and Nilho Point, where Blacktip and Whitetip Sharks hang out.

The story of the best diving on Tinian has yet to be written. With its clear water, low population pressure and rocky coastline, Tinian shows excellent promise. Northern is excited about its potential. "With the ferry we're no longer limited to the sites near Saipan. We'll be able to explore the south end of the island, which nobody has done."

Rota

Just 40 miles north of Guam, Rota is an idyllic retreat—everybody's idea of

ON GETAWAY DAY WE DID A JUNGLE exploration worthy of Indiana Jones. Three years ago a cave had been rediscovered that was home to the ancient Chamorros about 500 years earlier

and used by the Japanese as a field hospital during the war. Getting there was half



the fun, following a rutted dirt track through sword grass and thick jungle canopy. The trail had been cleared just a year ago, but has grown over again. Hiking the last 500 yards, we used a machete to cut through the foliage. The cave is high and narrow, its walls decorated with primitive paintings of marlin, turtles, people, hand prints and vertical lines that reminded me of picket fences. Near the entrance was Japanese graffiti, which after 60 years has become part of history. Remains of wooden beds were on the floor, as well as beer and saki bottles, and enameled teacups.

Japanese Graffiti and Primitive Art

A peaceful ending to an exhilarating day of diving off Palau.

what a small tropical island should be. There's one small village, deserted beaches, sheer cliffs, dense jungle and two resorts (one with a golf course). It's a place to relax and escape from the stress of the working world.

Rota's best known dive is the *Shoun Maru*, a 393-foot Japanese freighter sunk in 1944. It's a spectacularly dramatic dive, covered with the adornment of more than 50 years spent in the sea.

Snake Eyes was a 135-foot Chinese fishing trawler, captured by the U.S. Coast Guard while trying to smuggle illegal aliens into Guam. When Mark heard about it, he convinced the mayor to request it from the federal government. In 1999, *Snake Eyes* was sunk there, along with another smuggling ship.

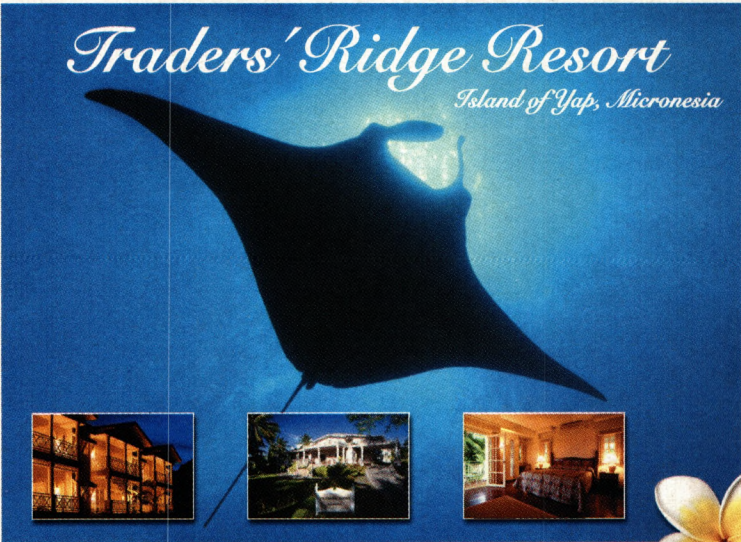
In the prevailing excellent visibility, I could see *Snake Eyes* from the surface. On the aft deck, the trawling machinery provided a foreground for dramatic silhouettes. I swam into the wheelhouse and squeezed down a hatch into the engine room. Despite the darkness and the close quarters, I was able to identify machinery and gauges. On the bridge, the compass binnacle is all that remains of the wheelhouse fixtures.

Rota is a delightful escape from the bustle of crowded destinations. The exceptional visibility, the dramatic jungle panorama and the laid-back friendliness of the people make this a delightful addition to any Micronesia itinerary. 🐠

Special thanks to Rick Northen of Stingray Divers and Mark Michael of Dive Rota for their assistance and support for this article.

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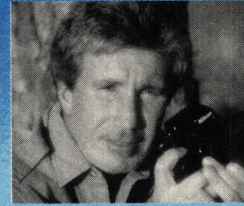
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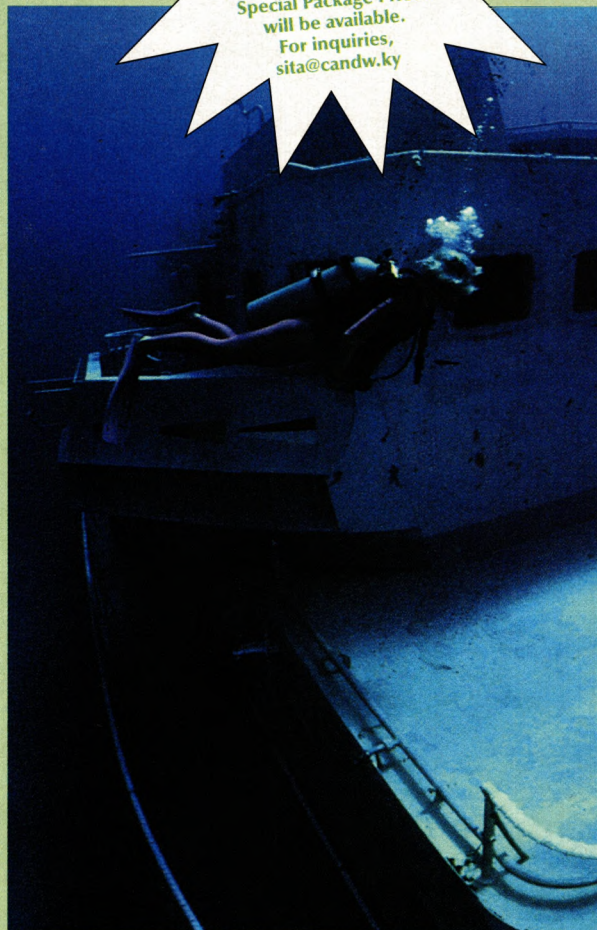
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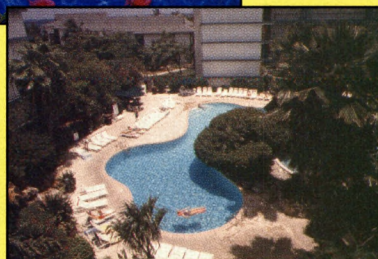
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The Treasure Island Resort property has three large freshwaters pools plus a cool whirlpool and Jacuzzi. Several Restaurant options include a Deli, "Hook's Seafood Grotto and Sushi Bar" and "The Mighty Aphrodite" featuring Greek cuisine. A hotel Shopping Arcade includes a Barber and Beauty Salon, Sundry shop and a full service Island Tour Desk. Adjacent to the hotel are numerous shopping and restaurant opportunities.

Bob Soto's PADI 5 Star Dive Shop and PADI 5 Star Development Center are on the premises.

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Feel the magic of a sprawling 90-acre resort that radiates elegance. 289 guestrooms including new beachfront suites and the Regency Club. Six pool oasis; including footbridge, whirlpools and swim-up gazebo bars. Nine hole golf course and ferry service to Rum Point. Retail shops, complete spa facilities and salon services.



Marriott

A deluxe Seven Mile beachfront hotel featuring 309 spacious rooms and landscaped lush tropical gardens within a central courtyard. Beachfront dining and buffets, courtyard oceanview and oceanfront rooms include TV, mini-bar, coffee maker, in-room safe, phone and hair dryer.

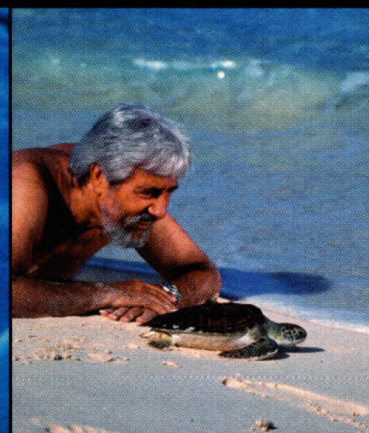


Holiday Inn

A 231 room 5-story hotel with spectacular ocean views across from Seven Mile Beach. Mangrove Grill, Lobby Bar and Bach Restaurant/Bar. Coffee maker, in-room safe, hairdryer, iron, mini-bar, TV & telephone with voicemail.

Westin

A new Oceanfront resort on Seven Mile beach designed with traditional architecture w/french doors and balconies in most rooms. Two pools, pool bar, tennis plus both fine and casual dining. Islandview, partial oceanview and oceanfront rooms. Children under 18 at no charge.



Dive Resorts & Condos



Seaview Hotel and Dive Resort

The Seaview, a small intimate seaside hotel, has recently been converted into Grand Cayman's newest dedicated dive resort operated by divers for divers.

Ideally situated on the quiet side of George Town (a 6 minute walk) this cozy resort offers divers living coral reefs and the Cayman Wall just steps away from their hotel room.

With only 15 rooms this resort offers a casual and friendly atmosphere with a swimming pool, ocean view restaurant and two bars. A PADI 5 Star Dive Shop offers complete services for shore & boat diving, rentals and training as well as showers and lockers. Bob Soto's Dive Boats depart morning, afternoon and night from the Resort's dive boat dock, The Seaview is an ideal resort for small dive groups, couples and singles divers seeking dive buddies.

Guests are assured a quiet and relaxing dive vacation. Copies and fax services are available as well as an air conditioned meeting room. Continental breakfast is included in all dive packages however, a full breakfast is also available. Pets allowed.

Regal Beach Club

New and graciously appointed villas at Regal Beach Club offers a luxurious harborage for the perfect dive vacation. Sparkling swimming pools, tennis court, exercise facility, laundry and maid service—nestled amidst an abundance of tropical blooms on beautiful Seven Mile Beach.



Plantation Village

Thatched beach cabanas overlook the beautiful Seven Mile Beach. Fully equipped kitchens, maid service, private patio and satellite TV. Two freshwater pools and complimentary kayaks, bikes, lighted tennis courts and gas BBQs. Oceanfront oceanview and poolview condos.

Villas of the Galleon

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Skin Diver travel guide



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Dear Diver,

Five hundred miles south of Miami, lies the tiny paradise of Grand Cayman. The silver white sands of Seven Mile Beach create a dramatic site as you view this clean, unspoiled stretch of nature. The island is surrounded by the crystal clear waters of the Caribbean. Wall sites and sheer drop offs can be found on all sides of the Island. Fish, critters, coral and sponges abound. The Cayman Islands are known as the "Number One Diving Destination in the World."

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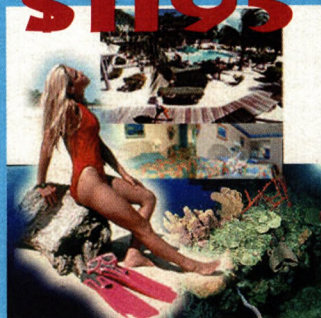
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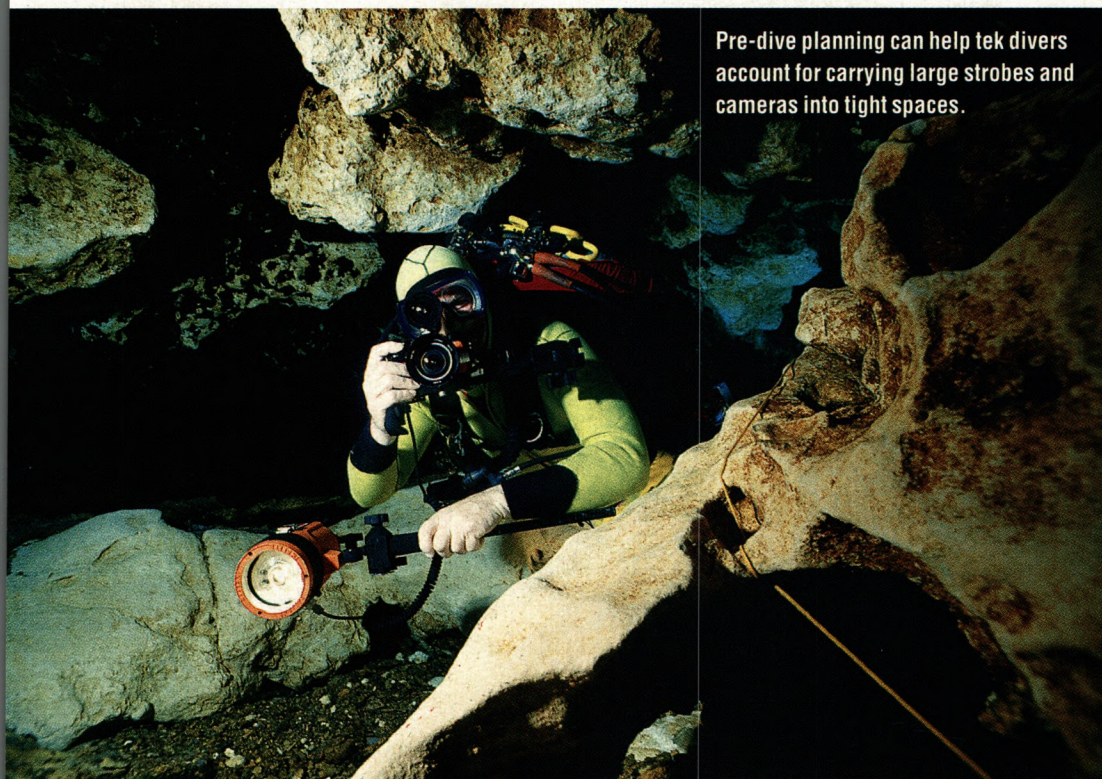
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Tek Photography

BY PETE NAWROCKY

MANY OF TODAY'S DIVERS ARE ENGAGED in "technical" diving. Many of today's

be occupied with the primary dive light, while the other hand may be



Pre-dive planning can help tek divers account for carrying large strobes and cameras into tight spaces.

needed to pull through a strong current. So where does the camera go?

First of all, the camera should be left behind until this area has been dived by the photographer. After the site has been chosen and a decision made as to what subject will be photographed, the diver will need to devise a dive plan. The plan should take into consideration the following:

- **Current:** If the current is too strong, the diver may not be able to swim a housing against it, in which

Before you decide just to "grab and go," don't bring a camera into any situation that you haven't encountered before...plan your dive carefully.

divers are also engaged in underwater photography. Put those two together, and you could have some problems. Or at least some problems that need to be thought out ahead of time. Before you decide to "grab and go," don't bring a camera into any situation that you haven't encountered before, and plan your dive carefully. The following areas are just two of the many situations that a tek photographer may encounter.

Cave Diving

Diving and exploring the subterranean world of an underwater cave takes special training and equipment. Double tanks, back-up lights and the necessary reels needed to safely navigate this environment quickly take up all available body space. One hand will

case a Nikonos may work best.

- **Strobe lighting:** The cave opening needs to be large enough for the diver and all his equipment. Sidemount explorers may have to change their approach in order to get through a two-foot-wide crack. Navigating through tight areas may require reconfiguring equipment and even more planning. Also, multiple strobe systems may not work in tight areas because the strobe arms cannot be extended properly. The diver may wish to have his buddy carry and position the secondary slave strobe in order to achieve results in tight places.

- **High-flow areas:** These areas may require modifying techniques, such as allowing the diver without the camera to lead the dive. The lead diver can

actually deflect part of a strong current, but the photographer will have to stay close behind to take advantage of the flow deflection.

- **Primary light:** Once inside the cave, it will be necessary to swim with a light and camera system at the same time. Attaching a primary light to the camera system or using a "Goodman-style handle" (allowing the diver to hold both the light and the camera at the same time) is a good idea.

- **Sidemount diving:** In this situation, the tanks are moved from the diver's back and are mounted alongside the body. Air management is even more critical since the entire air supply is not accessible from one regulator. This type of diving will require multiple regulator exchanges during the dive, which means losing the use of one hand during those times. (This config-



With one hand on the anchor line, tek photographers can find themselves grappling with bulky camera systems.

graphers in a wreck diving situation should consider the following:

be free so that the power inflator can be manipulated.

- **Drysuits:** It may also be necessary to access drysuit valves to prevent over- or under-inflation. Wrist mounting the computer is one solution. Hold the anchor line with the same hand to which the computer is attached, allowing the opposite hand the freedom to clip off the camera and then perform computer or regulator changes.

- **Housed systems:** These systems are bulkier to work with in the water and create more drag, therefore more fatigue. Aluminum housings tend to have deeper working ranges than plastic housings. However, metal housings can have problems with fogging when encountering drastic temperature changes. Using a desiccant to absorb moisture or cooling the housing down prior to submersion can alleviate this prob-

Systems for handling gear are available with retractable lanyards....The camera can now hang in front of the diver and both hands will be free.

uration is considered extreme and should not be attempted without proper training.) Placement of camera lanyards must not interfere with regulator access. In this case, it may be best to dispense with any lanyards to avoid entanglement with regulator hoses.

- **Deco bottles:** Most cave divers leave the "deco" bottles at the cave entrance where decompression stops will be done. Some buddy teams work with the photographer, allowing his buddy to carry the deco gas into the cave, while he manages the camera system. It is the photographer's responsibility to ensure that his deco bottle is placed properly and secured.

Wreck Diving

Exploring shipwrecks in deeper water for longer periods of time has become commonplace for the advanced wreck fraternity. Tek photo-

- **Gloves:** Gloves hinder movement and dexterity.

- **Buoyancy:** Unlike cave divers that more often than not can put a camera down to free up both hands, wreck divers will be hanging in open water and may have to stay close to or hold onto the anchor line while maintaining neutral buoyancy. Wrist lanyards can be uncomfortable because the extra weight or drag on the arm can be fatiguing or interfere with gear management. Computers that require manual changes may be difficult to work with unless the camera system is "clipped" off to allow the use of both hands. Accessing a second regulator with one hand holding the anchor line and a camera interfering with the other can turn into a nightmare. Remember, in this situation, neutral buoyancy will be important to maintain depth. The left hand will need to

lem. It is best to check with the manufacturer for the maximum working depth of the equipment.

- **Gear handling systems:** Systems for handling gear are available with retractable lanyards. These gadgets work well since the lanyard can be locked into a preset length or set to retract. The camera can hang in front of the diver and both hands will be free. This will allow full access to all valves with either hand. The attachment clip should be a quick-release style.

That's a Handful

This probably sounds like a lot of work...well, you're right, it is! This is the reason that any dive of this nature should be pre-dived, planned out and discussed. Work as a team to achieve the best results, but if you don't know the dive or the gear, leave the camera behind! 🐠



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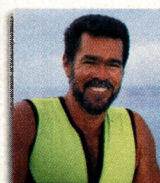
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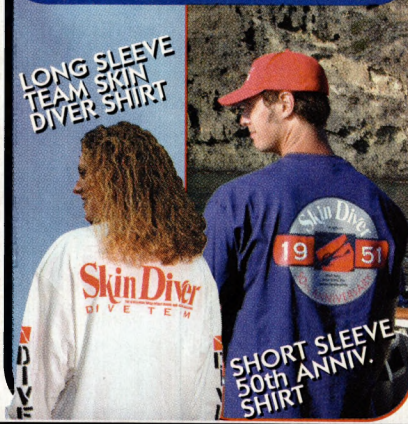
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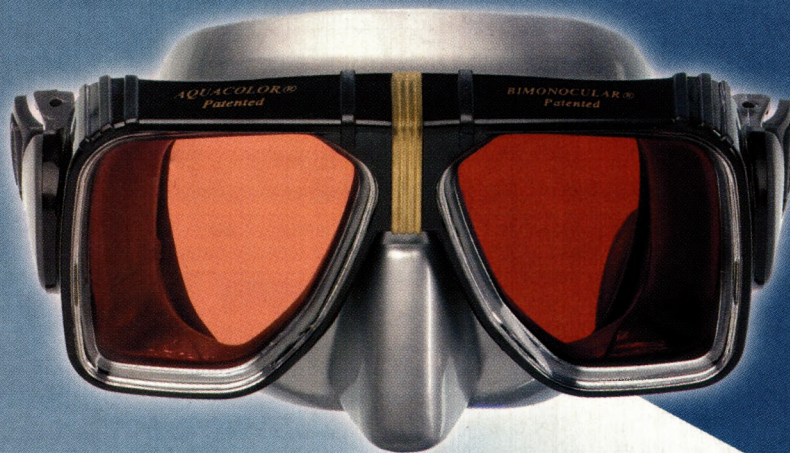
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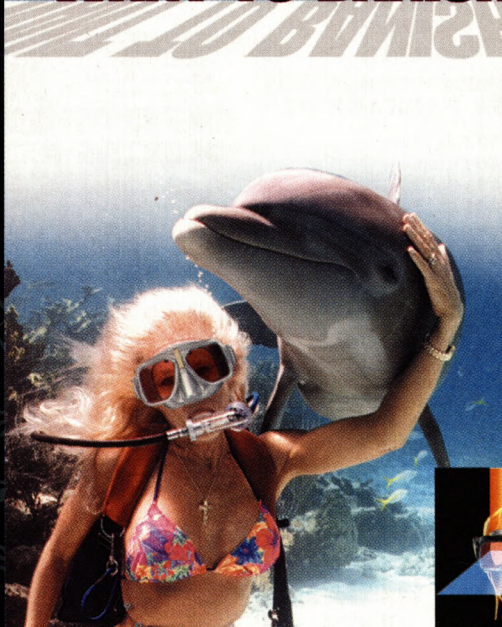
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*For magazines mailed to subscribers only. Grand prize will include a first time use payment of \$800. Each submission becomes property of *Skin Diver* magazine (photos will not be returned). *Skin Diver* is not responsible for lost or damaged submissions. Entries submitted without entry fee will be disqualified.

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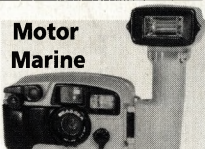
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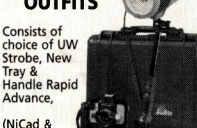
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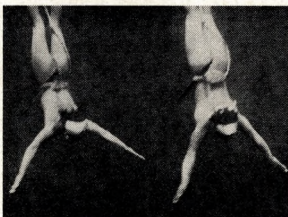
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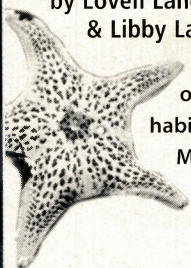


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BY FRED BOVE, M.D., PH.D.

MOST SPORT SCUBA DIVERS HAVE LONG since added decompression computers (DCs) to their dive bags. Interestingly enough, the U.S. Navy has never authorized a DC for its divers—until now. But the process of selection and testing for approval didn't happen overnight.

In 1977, the Navy SEAL community requested that the U.S. Navy develop a DC. During the late 1970s, SEALs had introduced two innovations to Navy diving. The first was a new closed-circuit mixed gas Scuba rebreather that used a microprocessor to control the partial pressure of oxygen at a constant 0.7 ATA, regardless of depth. The other innovation was the Dry Deck Shelter—an underwater garage that fits onto the deck of a nuclear submarine to house a small underwater vehicle called a SEAL delivery vehicle (SDV).

SEALs operating SDVs from a Dry Deck Shelter (see photo) perform long, multilevel dives. Use of the Standard Navy Air Decompression Tables resulted in unnecessarily long decompression times. As with recreational divers who do multilevel dives, a decompression computer is a far better way to calculate decompression for these dives. The Navy Experimental Diving Unit (NEDU) began the effort to develop the Navy's DC in 1978. Initial studies were aimed at developing a decompression algorithm for the new constant partial pressure breathing mix. The primary investigator for the development of these new tables was Captain Ed Thalmann, the Senior Medical Officer at NEDU. By 1981, Captain Thalmann had supervised

hundreds of experimental dives and completed the development of the new tables.

Fielding of a Navy computer was delayed for a number of years while the Navy tested several computers and one additional decompression algorithm. By November of 1995, the Navy concluded that the Thalmann model (VVAL18) was the best deco algorithm

that he will be safely decompressed.

In October 2000, NEDU recommended approval of the Cochran Navy for SEAL use and by January 2001, the Navy Supervisor of Diving and Salvage authorized the use of this DC by selected SEAL units in 2001. A six-month safety and reliability survey will be conducted by the SEAL units so a decision about whether or not to approve the computer for all Navy diving units can be made.

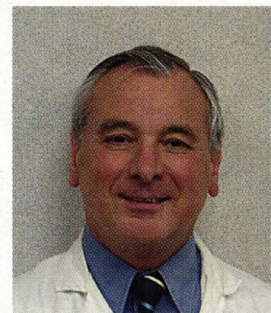
The Cochran Navy DC is the result of many years of decompression modeling research and many hundreds of experimental dives performed to test the accuracy of the models in order to ensure that the DC is safe for SEAL divers to use. Its approval heralds the dawn of a new era in Navy diving. Use of the Cochran Navy offers the opportunity for NEDU to

accurately capture research-quality information about operational dive profiles. This information will then be available for decompression researchers to review if and when episodes of decompression sickness occur. Revisions of the Thalmann algorithm in whatever problem areas may be identified can be made and software upgrades to the Cochran Navy implemented as necessary.

It should be noted that the algorithm for this DC was developed for military use, and is very aggressive. And, this DC is not available to the public. 🐡

This month's article was contributed by Captain Frank K. Butler, M.D., Director of Biomedical Research, Naval Special Warfare Command.

You can find more information on diving medicine at www.scubamed.com.



Photo/ Frank Butler, M.D.

Navy SEALs prepare a SEAL Delivery Vehicle for launch. Left Inset: The Cochran Navy dive computer.

Photo Courtesy of U.S. Navy

to incorporate into a Navy DC. A competitive bid was won by Cochran Undersea Technology and the Thalmann algorithm was programmed into the Cochran Commander. In January 1998, NEDU declared the Cochran Navy DC ready for field testing by the SDV teams.

SEALs field-tested the Navy in '98 and '99 and made several recommendations. Among these was that the Thalmann deco algorithm be programmed to assume that the diver is breathing air at 78 FSW and shallower, and breathing nitrox with a constant oxygen partial pressure of 0.7 ATA at 79 feet and deeper. This allows a SEAL diver to breathe from either an open-circuit air source (higher decompression stress shallower than 78 feet) or from the mixed gas rebreather (higher decompression stress deeper than 78 feet) and still be assured

time capsules

By Tiffany H. Carey

Each month *Skin Diver* looks back through its pages in search of those little nuggets of yesteryear—old equipment, trends of the time, new discoveries—that echo the times and may surprise or shock us. It's good to know your roots and how discoveries of old have helped shape diving today.

1982

Diving's Poet Laureate: Stan Waterman



One could argue that a man like Stan Waterman is a time capsule in and of himself. In September 1982, *Skin Diver* contributor Mim Harrison went one-on-one with the award-winning filmmaker. Turns out that during his third and last winter as a blueberry farmer, Stan was influenced by a *National Geographic* article on Jacques Cousteau. He decided to get more than a “vicarious kick out of life.” And has he ever! Some decades later, Stan’s career has created some of the most amazing underwater images ever to appear on screen. With films like *Blue Water, White Death*, Stan created a “landmark not only for the viewer but for the photographer.” Stan was once referred to by a reporter as “a man who does not know fear.” In response, Stan said, “Only an ass does not know fear. It’s a very intelligent reaction.” 🐟



1979

The Light Handle

In a “Special Underwater Photography Issue” (May 1979), Jack and Sue Drafahl revisited one of Sue’s first experiences with U/W photography. Camera bulk and a lack of camera maneuverability led Sue to her one complaint: she had spent “more time adjusting her equipment than actually taking pictures.” So, she suggested that Jack, “notorious for tinkering,” build her Nikonos “a strobe with ‘just a few’ special features.” Those features created a list that seemed endless, but Jack came through and produced a prototype of his Handle. A plexiglass bar with two plexiglass tubes on either end provided a strobe without switches or strobe arms and a battery-saving feature.



Jack sold several Handles as a result of this article, but has since then retired his invention, using it only himself on occasion. 🐟



1964

Fashion World for Waterbugs



Before the drysuit, divers tried almost anything to stay warm in cold water. From “...smearing themselves with lard oil, axle grease, etc...” to experimenting with an Eskimo diet of only “...raw fish and seal blubber,” divers struggled to stay in the water year-round. In the '50s, though, the “original frogman suits” were developed; but “they were not very pretty,” and dressing in the “ungainly suits” came with a “certain amount of embarrassment.” However, in October 1964, a wave of more fashionable watersports attire hit the scene. Full-colored suits and suits with brightly colored striping ruled the waters, while divers and nondivers alike slipped into the latest trend in water-wear. Not only could divers stay wet year-round, but they could look good too.

And thank goodness, because I might have spent the '80s without my favorite fluorescent green shorty. 🐟



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Egos Don't Float

BY PETER AJTAI • ILLUSTRATION BY KIM WILSON BRANDT

DIVING SHOULD BE A RELAXING AND ENJOYABLE PASTIME. So, how did descriptions of a near death experience, a lifeguard search and Volkswagen-sized boulders get into my dive log?

Well, I woke up one Saturday morning and smiled as I thought of the dive I would soon enjoy with four of my friends. With the sun barely cresting above the sandstone cliffs off the beach, the five of us waded into the waters of our favorite Southern California dive spot. I had dived here previously and felt I could do this dive with my eyes closed. Thinking about the colorful critters I would soon be admiring, I hurried to the shore and suited up, not bothering to scope out the conditions.

Immediately after I pulled on my fin I began a backward entry into the water. This is when I noticed that the waves had an incredible amount of power behind them, and there was an occasional overhead rolling in. The white water of surf stretched out farther than usual, and the lines of waves were not coming in parallel to the beach, which meant there was a rip tide. The waves came in about 45 degrees from the north, and were quickly pushing me south. I swore at the waves, promising myself I would make it past the breakers. No matter what, I was determined to dive. Not to mention the fact that I didn't want anyone to think I was a second-rate diver.

As I fumed and cussed, the water continued taking me further away from our sandy entry point, and with a mild sense of hysteria, I found myself in the churning waters of rock piles south of our dive spot.

I was about to have my skull split in two between a merci-

less wave and a group of jagged rocks, when I came to the realization it was time to abort. I tried to duck under the waves and drag myself back to the entry point, but the current overpowered me. Between the huge whitecaps, I became sickly aware that I was in this mess entirely by my own free will. The current eventually swept me past the rocky outcropping, and I managed to pull myself up onto the beach just before running into the pier pilings. I found out

later that all my friends had aborted the dive in knee-high water.

Meanwhile, the lifeguards, who had been alerted by my conscientious dive buddies, called my apartment, not far from our dive spot. The lifeguards asked if anyone knew where I was, then they said I was last seen in the ocean and was now missing. My roommate's mother and sister were visiting for the weekend.

Well, you can just



imagine the amount of unnecessary stress I managed to cause my dive buddies, my roommate, her sister and mother, several lifeguards and myself.

I learned the hard way why it is always essential to study and identify water conditions before starting a dive. Although passing on a dive may mean you never get off the dive boat or you may have to return home without getting wet, it's well worth it in the end. Making a decision to pass on this dive would have saved me a world of trouble.

When diving, common sense cannot be left on the shore, but an enlarged ego should. There is no room for machismo. In this instance, trying to impress my friends only led to stress and embarrassment. From one diver to another, remember this: Egos *don't* float. 🐟



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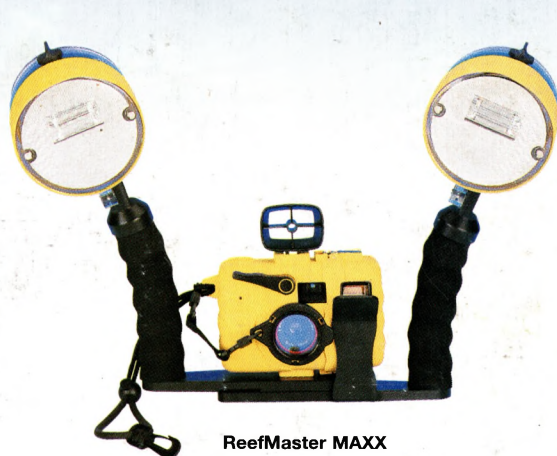
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